

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 1730.—VOL. LXVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 8, 1893.

[PAID ONE PENNY.]



ON A SUDDEN A HAND SEIZED LEILA'S ASSAULTANT AND FLUNG HIM ROUND INTO THE ROAD.

LEILA'S HEARTACHE.

[A NOVELETTE.]

CHAPTER I.

"Who was that pretty girl I saw you with the other day in Bond-street?" asked Horace Treherne of his friend Jack Fortescue, one afternoon, when he and his brother were at the former's rooms indulging in a quiet smoke.

"Pretty girl—Bond-street!" pondered Jack. "Oh, you mean last Wednesday. That was my sister Leila; she was staying up in town for a week or two. She's not a bad-looking little thing, is she?"

The elder Treherne laughed.

"Your sister would be flattered could she hear you, Jack!"

"Not bad-looking!" echoed Horace, indignantly; "you unappreciative brute, Jack, why, she's lovely. I declare I've thought of her ever since."

"Glad you admire her, old fellow; you're not by any means the first that has done so."

"You must take me down to your place and introduce me one day, will you?" went on Horace, persuasively, "the week after next! I'm leaving town to-morrow till then."

Jack nodded acquiescence.

"Mind, I shall keep you up to it," said Horace, as he rose to leave. "Coming my way!" turning to his brother.

"No," returned Clinton Treherne. "I'll meet you at the club at seven o'clock. Poor inflammable Horace," he pursued with a smile, as the door closed on him. "I'm sure the wonder is that he is still unfettered, the number of times he has imagined himself the victim of the tender passion. I think, however, when he meets the right girl he will love heartily and truly. Have you a photograph of your bewitching sister, Jack? Horace has good taste as a rule."

"Yes, I've one in my room. I had it coloured, and it's really a very good likeness, only it hardly does her justice, although I say it who shouldn't."

Jack lounged across the room and paused mid-way.

"Treherne," he said, "I'm going home to-

morrow for awhile; should you care to go with me? We've not much attraction to offer you, but if you will put up with us for a week or two you'll be very welcome."

"My dear fellow, I'm afraid the sufferance will be on your side, not mine. I shall be delighted to accompany you; fortunately I have no very binding engagements just at present."

"That's settled, then," said Jack, delighted.

He is immensely flattered at being able to call himself a friend of Clinton Treherne, a man of no small mark in the fashionable world, whose word on all subjects carries considerable weight, and without whom few assemblies are thought complete.

"I'll drop a line to the mater, so that she may expect us."

Jack vanished into an inner room and returned with a cabinet-sized frame, which he handed to Treherne.

"There's Lil's photo," he said; "you can study it while I write. We think a good deal of her, you know, but perhaps you may not."

Treherne opened the frame with a slightly amused smile. He was known to be excessively difficult on the score of beauty, and to accord his

favour but rarely, but on this occasion he forgot to be critical. For once photography had done its work well, and the picture, exquisitely coloured, was one that could not fail to rivet attention.

Do any of my readers believe in love at portrait sight, if one may coin an expression? Few, perhaps; and Clifton Treherne certainly would have scouted the idea of such a thing more than anyone; yet that pictured face stirred him in a strange way, and he felt, like Horace, that it was one calculated to haunt the thoughts. The beautiful soft, dark eyes, brimful of life and spirit, which seemed to meet his own with mischievous defiance, the smiling, dimpled mouth through which was just visible the gleam of white teeth, the softly rounded chin and throat, all were wonderfully portrayed.

"Well, what is your opinion?" asked Jack, looking up from his letter with a smile.

With a start, Treherne came back to realities. Vexed that Jack should see him still intent on the photograph, more vexed still at the effect it had produced on him, he went to the other extreme, and threw into his tone an amount of coldness and indifference which he was far from experiencing.

"She looks very wilful," he said, shortly.

"I'm bringing Clinton Treherne down with me to-morrow," wrote Jack; "you know he is a great swell in his way, with hundreds of invitations always on hand, and it is very good of him to waste his time on such a humble individual as myself. I showed him Leila's photograph, and tried to get a compliment for her, for he is a great connoisseur of pretty women, but all he remarked was that she looked very wilful. There's one for our beauty."

"Our beauty," read the above lines with her red lips pouted, and her delicate Cretan nose divinely elevated.

"What an insufferably rude man," she thought; "whatever does Jack want to bring him down here for? How does he propose to entertain this 'swell'? I suppose he is one of those languid, supercilious wretches who think they honour you if they address a word to you, and expect you to fall down and worship them for their blue eyes and golden moustache; he will find himself mistaken, as far as I am concerned," and with a somewhat ruffled look on her charming, expressive face, Miss Fortescue proceeded to her room to prepare for her walk to the station to meet her brother and his friend.

Leila donned a dark blue linen dress which fitted her slim figure to perfection, although only fashioned at home by her own skilful fingers; a dark blue sailor hat trimmed with wild flowers, and her toilet completed, surveyed herself in the glass with a little satisfied smile, feeling quite equal to meeting this great "connoisseur" in beauty.

She ran downstairs and looked in at the drawing-room, where her mother and sister were sitting at work.

"I'm going to the station to meet Jack and his friend," she said; "they are coming by the three o'clock train."

"Dear me!" said Florrie, a somewhat precocious young lady of sixteen, who gave promise of being no insignificant rival to her elder sister in point of looks. "I should have thought such a great man as Mr. Treherne would have had a special train put on for his use."

Leila laughed. Miss Florrie had, like her sister, a fair share of impudence.

Leila sped quickly on her way, but she arrived only just in time to see the train enter the station. She eagerly scanned the long line of carriages for Jack's well-known figure, and the next moment saw him spring lightly on to the platform.

Two or three other men got out of the same compartment, but Leila, with her ideas still firmly rooted to blue eyes and a golden moustache, found no one to answer to that description.

"He has not come after all," she thought, as she advanced to where her brother was standing, and though she would not have owned to it,

conscious of a slight feeling of disappointment. "I was sure he would throw Jack over at the last moment."

"Ah! Lil, how are you?" said Jack's hearty voice. "I thought you'd be here. Treherne," wheeling round and addressing a man a few paces in the rear, "this is my sister, Leila—Leila, Mr. Treherne."

Leila raised her eyes, those unerring weapons of war of hers, with a quick glance of scrutiny and inquiry by no means lost on its object.

So this was Clinton Treherne, the great authority on all subjects, with whom half the women in London were said to be in love. Why, he was absolutely plain; to be sure he was tall enough, and aristocratic looking, and yes, his eyes were good; but for the rest his complexion was dark, and his hair and moustache just the colour of any ordinary man's, thought the young lady, who had evidently expected this *rara avis* to bear more outward signs of the superiority.

While these thoughts were rapidly coursing through her mind Leila made a polite little inclination, showing all her dimples and her pretty white teeth in a smile of welcome.

"You'll walk down, I suppose Jack?" she asked, "unless you are tired," turning to Treherne.

A slight smile stirred that gentleman's grave lips. To a man who had hunted game in India the idea of being fatigued by a two hours' run into Hertfordshire was rather amusing.

Jack burst out laughing.

"We're awfully knocked up, both of us," he said. "If you'd been thoughtful, Lil, you would have had two invalid carriages waiting for us."

"Don't laugh at your own jokes," returned his sister; "though, on the other hand, it may be the best plan, as you can never get anyone to do so for you. I suppose," she continued, addressing Treherne—they had left the station now, and were pacing the quiet country lane—"I suppose you have not associated all this time with my brother without discovering his bright and original wit. We are quite convinced it will win him vast renown one of these days."

"Come, no chaff, Lil, or you may chance to come off worse," said her brother. "You are a lucky fellow, Treherne, to be spared the infliction of sisters."

"What an opening for a pretty speech," said Leila, giving Clinton one of those swift upward glances that were apt to subjugate the strongest; and she would have been gratified could she have known how quickly under his grave exterior Treherne's usually steady pulses were beating.

"I am not a good hand at pretty speeches, Miss Fortescue."

"Then you'll get on badly with Leila," said Jack, wickedly, "for she likes plenty of soft sawder."

"Jack, how can you!" broke out Leila, indignantly, "such stories, too. What will Mr. Treherne think!"

"I should certainly credit your word before his," replied Treherne, with one of those rare, sweet smiles that made his somewhat plain features so attractive; and Leila, who it must be confessed was nourishing a slight grudge against him for that unlucky speech spent her photograph, felt inclined to forgive him on the spot.

"He's not ugly, after all," she thought; "he could not be with that smile and those eyes, and he looks so sad, poor fellow."

Perhaps herein lay some of the secret of Treherne's fascination. The slight air of melancholy that seemed to hang about him, pervading his whole manner, the half mournful look in his large grey eyes, could not fail to attract one. Women made him the hero of a dozen romances, men even thought that at some date or other he had been the victim of some unhappy love affair.

"I am afraid you will find it very dull down here," said Leila. "I hope Jack—"

"Jack has made all excuses," interrupted Treherne, gently, "which I must assure you, as I did him, are quite unnecessary. It was a great pleasure to me to accept his kind invitation."

They had reached the house by now. It was

small, but stood in a really spacious garden, on which Leila devoted no small amount of her time and pains. Mrs. Fortescue came out to meet her son and welcome his friend; and as Leila watched his gentle courtesy and the respectful deference of his manner to her mother she wondered less and less at his successful reputation.

It was a merry meal that evening, although Treherne was more silent than of wont. Every moment Leila's presence heightened the fascination that even her portrait had possessed for him; her merry sallies, her gay laughter, her unstudied grace of movement; above all, her bright bewitching beauty made his heart throb as no other woman had ever had the power to before, despite the way in which his favour and his love had been courted by so many.

But he was one of those men who always have great control over all their emotions, and dislike above all to believe themselves the sport of fancy or romance; therefore he clothed himself in rather an extra amount of reserve, for fear of betraying in any way his feelings.

CHAPTER II.

At half past eight the next morning Leila was in the garden, clipping off the dead flowers and gathering fresh ones for the vases. Humming the while some lively air she flitted about, all unconscious of a pair of grey eyes earnestly regarding her from the dining-room window.

At length Clinton could no longer resist temptation. He sauntered down the few steps that led to the garden, and was at her side ere Leila perceived him.

"Good morning, Miss Fortescue."

She turned with a slight start.

"Good morning," she said, giving him her hand, "you are out betimes. I thought London men rarely appeared before the day had been well aird."

"You seem to have formed a very poor estimate of the powers of London men, Miss Fortescue?"

"Yes. Well, if I wrong them, you must pardon me, and lay it to the score of my country ignorance."

Treherne vaguely wondered what faults or follies he would not have pardoned her, as she stood there before him in the flush of her bright young beauty, her soft dark eyes smiling up into his, her rosebud mouth looking as though framed only to win kisses.

He had known her not yet four-and-twenty hours, and already he felt as though his love for her had lasted for years.

"Oh! ye men, how the strongest among you will go down before the witchery of a pretty face!"

Not that Treherne intended to lay down his arms yet, he was far too strong-minded to be satisfied with himself for succumbing as it was so easily.

"We have lived in the country now for seven years," went on Leila, swinging her basket to-and-fro. "I was only twelve years old when we came here. I didn't mean to tell you my age," she added, with a bright laugh, "though it seemed very much like it. I only meant to show you I was then too young to profit by my London experiences."

"I don't think there is much profit to be derived from London experiences."

"Don't you? I enjoy going to London. I stay sometimes with some relations, and I like it very much, and should do so better still if—"

"If what?" he asked, as she paused abruptly.

"If I had lots of money," she returned, laughing and flushing. "What a sordid creature you will think me; but the fact is, you know, the cousins I stay with are immensely rich, and they dress in the height of the fashion, and then Jack tells me I cut such a rum figure by their side. Don't be horrified," with a mischievous little laugh, "it's Jack's language, not mine. He says one can see at once I come from the country; isn't it unkind? You see I make my own dresses,

chiefly, and of course they're not elaborately fashioned like theirs. What do you think? Do I look very odd?"

And the young lady brought the full artillery of her eyes to bear on Treherne's face as she asked the question in a perfectly innocent manner.

He looked down at the dainty little figure, and thought that no dress fashioned by Worth or Eliza could show it off to better advantage.

"I am afraid," he said, his grey eyes unconsciously softening as they gazed at her, "I'm afraid Jack is given to drawing on his imagination. Any difference between you and your cousins can only be to your advantage."

"And you said you could not make pretty speeches," said Leila, her eyes dancing with merriment. "I really must tell Jack what you say, because you are an authority on all matters, I hear. Your reputation preceded you here."

"Indeed! I did not know I was a person of such consequence."

"No! I assure you it is the case. I heard—"

Here Leila's courage suddenly failed her, under the grave scrutiny of his glance, and she stopped short.

"You heard what?" queried Treherne, quietly.

"Nothing," returned the young lady, shutting her mouth with a determined little snap.

"Am I to conclude, then, that you, too, are given to flights of imagination, Miss Fortescue?" he said, with a slight smile that had the effect of irritating Leila.

"By no means," she returned. "Some day when I know you better I will tell you what I heard."

"Why not now?"

"Why not now?" she repeated, opening her lovely eyes with a provoking little air of surprise, "because I hardly know you at all yet, and I can't tell how you might take it, for I,—with a slight emphasis on the words, that did not escape Treherne's notice—"I do not form estimates of people's characters before I am acquainted with them."

"I should say that were impossible for any one to do."

"So should I, but it seems not," answered Leila, with a wicked little smile. "And now, if you are agreeable, we will go in to breakfast. I am very hungry, whatever you may be. I don't suppose you have got up an appetite by this unearthly hour."

"Do I like him?" pondered Leila, as she paced the walk by his side, Treherne apparently in a deep reverie, and all unconscious of her presence. "I'm sure I don't know. Somehow or other he makes one feel so small, and it is not pleasant, as Jack would vulgarly call it, 'to be set upon.'"

Very often during the ensuing days did Leila ask herself that question, whether she liked him or no, when it would seem as though they had entered into a compact to disagree on every subject. Numerous were the discussions and altercations that took place between them, in all of which, however much she might resist, Leila ultimately found herself obliged to yield to the force of his strong will.

Treherne seemed to have taken upon himself the task of reproofing and subduing her; and the young lady, who had never had a word of remonstrance addressed to her, did not know what to make of it. In her heart of hearts, had she but owned it, she might have perceived that the subtle power he exercised over her was not utterly displeasing to her.

And how had it meanwhile fared with Treherne? He was willing to own now that he had met his fate, and had given up resisting it. He loved her as men of his temperament do love when for the first time they yield their whole heart into a woman's keeping. How lovely she looked when she was angry, with her cheeks flushed, and her beautiful eyes flashing to sheer amazement at any one daring to dispute her will! How he longed to win her for himself!

Yet still he hung back, for he saw no sign of his affection being returned. He forgot that he

completely hid his own feelings, and that his behaviour was scarcely compatible with a love-lorn suitor's.

One morning, about a fortnight later, Jack, Leila and Treherne were standing in the large bay window, after breakfast, chatting together.

"I shall write and ask Horace to come down," said Jack, suddenly; "he said he would, and as there is another spare room he may as well occupy it."

"Who is Horace?" asked Leila.

She was perfectly well aware who was the Horace in question, but she was in one of her provoking moods, and chose to feign ignorance.

"Horace is my brother," answered Treherne.

"And as great an authority on all matters temporal and spiritual as yourself!" she asked, maliciously.

Treherne was silent; he was hurt at her sarcasm.

"How you do let your tongue run away with you, Leila," said her brother. "I declare you are quite rude."

"Why, what did I say?" she asked, lifting lovely, innocent eyes to Treherne's face. "I humbly apologise if I was rude."

"Pray do not trouble to do so, Miss Fortescue," he returned, in a slightly constrained tone; "I ought, on the contrary, to thank you for your good opinion."

"Especially as I return good for evil," she answered.

"How so, pray?"

"Because you have such a very bad one of me."

"May I ask from what you draw your conclusion?"

"From your every word," she went on, keeping her eyes cast down to hide the laughter gleaming in them. "Why, you had a bad opinion of me before you saw me."

Treherne looked at her in utter amazement. That trifling incident in Jack's room had quite escaped his memory. Not so Jack himself; he knew perfectly to what his sister alluded, and was proportionately vexed with her, thinking Treherne might be annoyed with him for repeating his words.

"What nonsense you do talk, Leila," he broke out hastily; "I never came across such a girl."

"I should like your sister to explain herself, my dear fellow," said Treherne.

"She has nothing to explain," continued Jack; "she has women half the time any reason for what they say or do!"

"In fact, we are of such utterly inferior material that I wonder any of us can hold up our heads in the presence of you lords of the creation," retorted Leila, sulkily. "Look at Jack, for instance, how immaculate he is, 'even his failings lean to virtue's side!'"

Jack looked angry, and Leila laughed provokingly, while Treherne said, coldly, "I should not like to have you for a sister, Miss Leila."

Treherne had no intention of being discourteous; he merely spoke the words with, perhaps, a wish to retaliate in some way on her, but he deeply offended Leila. She turned to him with a sudden flame of anger in her dark eyes.

"As there is not the least probability of such a contingency, you might have spared yourself the trouble of expressing your feelings," and, thus saying, she turned her back on him, and ran down the steps into the garden.

Jack laughed as he remarked,—

"You've been and gone and done it this time, Treherne. I have never seen Leila in such a taking. You mustn't mind all she says, old man, it's all mischief; she really is a good little girl. And now I will just drop a line to Horace before post time. He said he would be disengaged this week."

He left the room, and Treherne remained still there in the window, his arms folded, deep thought imprinted on his brow.

What a fool he was, he mused, to vex her so often! Was that the way to teach her to care for him? What would be her answer did he tell her of his love for her? and tell her soon he

felt he must. Horace was coming—Horace, who is ten years younger than himself, handsome, gay, altogether a man to win the heart of such a girl.

He remembered his brother's words to the effect that Leila's face had haunted him since the day he saw her. What should she prove his fate also? If he could but win her before Horace came; and with sudden desperation and utter imperceptibility of the unfitness of the occasion he resolved to speak to her at once.

He followed her into the garden to where, in the distance, he saw her sitting in dignified solitude in the little summer-house.

She did not turn her head, or in any way show cognizance of his presence, even when he stood beside her.

"I have come to ask your forgiveness, Miss Fortescue," he said, in eager tones.

No answer. Treherne, where he stood, could only see the outline of a rounded chin and throat and one little shell-like ear. He went round to the other side and seated himself on the rustic bench.

"Have I really offended you past redemption?" he continued.

"It must be a matter of perfect indifference to you whether you have done so or no," she answered, frigidly.

"It is not a matter of perfect indifference to me," he returned, "and you know it very well."

"I know nothing of the kind, indeed." She saw he was inclined to be humble, so she wished to make the most of the occasion, and she looked so unapproachable that for a minute Treherne despaired of being able to introduce the subject so near his heart.

"Miss Fortescue," he said, at length, "I want you to tell me what you mean by saying that I had a bad opinion of you before I knew you."

No answer again. Miss Fortescue looks decidedly obstinate.

"You will tell me, will you not, Leila?"

She was about to inform him peremptorily that she had never given him permission to address her by her Christian name, but somehow—somehow it sounded very nice from his lips.

"No, I don't at all intend to," she replied.

"Then I must conclude that it is, as Jack avers, that you have no good reason for what you said."

"Indeed, I had an all-sufficient reason," she cried. "Jack showed you my photograph before you came down, and you said—you said"—she hesitated, feeling rather small—"that I looked very wilful. I thought that was very rude of you."

So this was the meaning of numerous little innuendoes that he had failed to understand. For a moment Treherne felt far from friendly towards poor Jack.

"Don't let Jack know I told you," went on Leila, hastily; "because he only repeated it to me in fun, and he would be vexed and say a girl can't keep a thing to herself. Besides, it is of no consequence."

"Not to you, perhaps," he returned, "but of the greatest to me, to think you have been nourishing resentment against me for words spoken, believe me, without any malicious intent."

"It does not matter," she repeated; "you cannot care so much, or you would not vex me often as you do," and actual tears of hurt pride rose to her eyes.

"I have, indeed, been unfortunate," said Treherne, sadly, "to have offended you so deeply, when I would have done anything to win your favour."

"My favour," she returned with an incredulous little laugh. "Why?"

"Why?" he repeated, and the words will out despite himself. "Why, because I love you, because I want to win you for my wife."

He spoke the words in sudden desperation, yet in a kind of repressed manner that made them sound almost cold.

To say that Leila was astonished would be to paint her feelings mildly. She sat and stared at him with wide, open eyes, as though she thought he had taken leave of his senses.

He must surely be joking! Love her when he was ever ready to contradict and reprove her

—when he always treated her as a child! She forgot at the time that love may sometimes evince itself in different ways.

She sat silent for some minutes, her bewildered feelings not allowing her to find speech.

"You do not speak," he said, drawing nearer. "Leila, will you not give me some hope?"

"No," she answered, on a sudden impulse, the impulse of a child to retaliate on someone who has vexed it. "You said just now you would not like to have me for a sister, you would surely still less like to have me for your wife!"

How one's whole future can be made or marred by a few hasty words! They were no sooner uttered than Leila regretted them, not because she knew herself to be in love with him, but because anger with her was ever short-lived, and she felt she was visiting his shortcomings too severely on his head.

But it was too late. Treherne was intensely sensitive, intensely proud. He would not have stopped to sue for the love of a princess of royal descent, however keenly he might hunger for it.

Leila, looking at him, saw how pale he turned—how, under his long moustache, he bit his lip till the blood almost came.

Then he drew himself up to his full height as he said, with cold dignity,--

"I regret to have intruded on you a subject evidently so distasteful to you; be assured I shall not repeat my offence. For the rest, you might have been generous enough to pardon a few thoughtless words, for which I had already apologised," and making her a grave inclination of the head he turned and left.

He might have made some excuses for her—he might have seen that she spoke in a sudden fit of temper; that he was somewhat to blame himself for prosecuting his suit at such an unlucky moment, and that, not having given her any proof before of his love, she was necessarily taken aback at his proposal.

But love is unreasoning as well as blind; and as Treherne strode from the summer-house he felt himself a very ill-used individual indeed.

CHAPTER III.

LEILA, left alone, sat for some time in a bewildered state of mind, that admitted of no definite sensation. When things began to clear somewhat her first proceeding was to indulge in a hearty fit of tears.

How rude she had been! How unkind I! What would Jack say if he knew of her treatment of his friend? But how could she guess he was in love with her? Surely he ought to have shown more sign of it!

Well, she would ask his pardon for her rudeness she determined, and then they would be friends again, for Leila felt in some vague way that an open breach between them would be productive of much regret on her part.

Somewhat cheered by this prospect she dried her eyes, and as soon as she thought they wore a presentable appearance she returned to the summer-house.

She did not meet Treherne till lunch time, and it was with very uncomfortable feelings that she saw him enter the room. He gave no signs of having been unduly moved, of the struggle of hurt pride and disappointed affection that he gone through; and Leila, sitting there in bewildered silence, began to think that scene in the summer-house must have been a dream.

She was roused at length by some words of her brother's.

"Mother, isn't it a shame, Treherne says he must leave us to-morrow!"

To-morrow! Leila's heart gave a horrified leap.

"I regret to find myself compelled to do so," said Treherne, in his quiet, high-bred tones, "but I received, not an hour since, letters that call me at once to town."

"What a tarradiddle," thought Florrie, who has wonderfully sharp wits, "there's something up between Lil and him. But he really lies very

well. I suppose it is an accomplishment learnt in good society."

"I am very sorry you must leave us," Mrs. Fortescue was saying, "we shall all miss you, very much. I hope we shall see you again when you can spare us a few days."

"You are very good," replied Treherne, and, perfect actor as he was, his colour deepened. "I have to thank you very much for your kindness. I hope you do not think me discourteous leaving you so abruptly."

"Engagements, I know, must be kept," answered Mrs. Fortescue, graciously.

"I tell Treherne I am sure he is leaving because Leila was so rude to him this morning," said Jack, little imagining the agonies he is inflicting on his sister. "Come, Lil, you might make the 'amende' and ask Treherne to stay."

Poor Leila, she felt the burning crimson mounting to her brow, and she was aware that at that moment she hated Jack with a dire hatred. What she answered she is not clearly conscious, but she murmured something to the effect that no doubt Mr. Treherne knew his own arrangements best.

"Important letters do come so very conveniently sometimes," remarked Florrie, with a mischievous twinkle in her blue eyes, which inspired Treherne with an ardent longing to box her ears.

Mrs. Fortescue, though not at all understanding, perceived that in some way or other something was amiss, and for the remainder of the meal directed the conversation into another channel.

Leila had no opportunity of making any advances towards reconciliation, for, directly after lunch, Jack and Treherne drove over to the place of a friend of the latter's, where they were also engaged to dine.

"If it is a wet night Carlton is sure to make us sleep there," said Jack, as they left; "so, if we don't put in an appearance to-morrow morning at breakfast you will know we are in safe keeping."

"I do think you have made bad use of your opportunities, Leila," said Florrie, as she stood at the window watching her brother and Treherne drive off in the phaeton that had been sent for them. "I should not have had a man's undivided attention for a fortnight without bringing him to the point."

"How can you speak so, Florrie!" cried her sister, indignantly, "it is positively common. I am sure I don't know who one would think you associated with."

"Well, as it is chiefly you and the mater, it speaks badly for you both," responded the young lady, unabashed. "I really did not mean to hurt your feelings, and I believe you could have had him had you wanted to, for I have seen all along he was taken with you."

Certainly, Florrie's perceptive powers did her credit.

"It's not always the men who are billing and cooing at you that are most taken," she goes on, as though she had the greatest experience in love matters. "Those sometimes feel most who show least. What does the poet tell us,—

"It is with feelings as with water:
The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb."

Leila deigned not to reply to this dissertation. She sought her room, there to indulge in solitary meditation.

So he was going to-morrow, going without another word. He could not really care for her, or he would not want to rush away from her thus.

She little guessed that he cared so much that he felt he dare not trust himself longer in her presence now he knew his love to be hopeless.

It was beginning to rain, she observed, as she stood disconsolately gazing out of her window; they would be sure to sleep at Captain Carlton's, and probably only return in time for Treherne to catch his train in the morning. Well, if that were how he showed his love it could not be worth much, Leila being under the impression that a man enamoured of her should sue for her favour on bended knee.

She went slowly downstairs to the drawing-room to try to busy herself with her flowers and

work, feeling that the house seemed of a sudden to have grown very dull and quiet. Last evening she had not the slightest idea of loving or being beloved by Clinton Treherne, and now though she told herself she did not care for him, his words had filled her with a dire quiet and unrest new to her.

The next morning dawned dull, wet [and gloomy, one of those days which if one is at all out of gear makes one take the darkest view of everything. Leila, who, whatever her faults, rarely failed in good temper, felt the influence of the weather, and was somewhat irritable.

"I think it very rude of Mr. Treherne to absent himself the last evening and morning," said Florrie, sententiously.

"Mr. Treherne did not know when he accepted the invitation that he would have to leave to-day," answered Leila.

"Have to leave!" repeated her provoking sister. "How can you let that excuse blind you? Either he has grown suddenly tired of us, or else—"

"I think you had better mind your own business," interrupted Leila, with more asperity than politeness.

"My dear," broke in Mrs. Fortescue's quiet voice, "pray do not quarrel. Indeed it is not worth while; and, for the rest, I am persuaded Mr. Treherne is too much of a gentleman to act in the slightest degree discourteously."

"It is not I who am quarrelling with Leila," said Florrie, laughing, "but Leila, who is determined to quarrel with me, and on a topic, as you observe, so little worth it."

"I declare you grow more incorrigible every day," returned Leila, as she rose from the table.

As she had surmised, the two young men only returned in time for Treherne to pack his portmanteau before starting. By this time all Leila's conflicting emotions had resolved themselves into a feeling of indignation; he must certainly, she decided, have been trifling with her.

Florrie, who, to use her expressive phraseology, was persuaded something was up, was meanwhile good-naturedly revolving in her active mind the possibility of affording her sister the opportunity of a few minutes' conversation alone with Treherne, but all to no purpose.

"Good-bye," she said to him when, the fly being at the door, he came in to bid them farewell. "Good-bye. You know we none of us believe in those important letters."

What answer could Treherne make? For once all the *savoir faire* of the man of the world proved powerless beneath the asy tongue of a girl of sixteen. He turned away in silence to Mrs. Fortescue, and thanked her in his low, impresive tones for all her kindness. The next moment Leila's hand lay in his, her cold little fingers in his strong clasp.

"Good-bye," she said, in a low voice.

If she had but looked up the great love and longing in his eyes must have woken an answering fire in her heart; but she steadily averted her gaze, and the next minute he had left the room.

"Go and tell him you hope he hasn't forgotten anything," whispered Florrie, giving her sister a little friendly push towards the door; but Leila did not move, and soon they heard the fly drive off.

She turned away from the window with an odd swelling at her throat, and a sudden smart of tears in her eyes.

"I hate him! I hate him!" she said to herself, all unconscious that the boundary between love and hate is so ill-defined that, under certain circumstances, we are often apt to mistake the one for the other.

Two days later Horace Treherne arrived. Leila, glad to escape from disturbing thoughts, and the feeling of *anxius* that was creeping over her, welcomed his coming with avidity.

Horace Treherne was a man well calculated to win the heart of any girl. Tall, eminently handsome, with the blue eyes and golden moustache Leila had decided beforehand would be Clinton's attributes, gay and pleasure-loving, but concealing under his careless exterior a tenacity

and strength of feeling that none, save his brother, gave him credit for.

He had had, as Clinton had observed, many flirtations, but the depths of his heart had never yet been stirred. It remained for Leila to do that—to take it by storm, as she had his brother's.

The first evening, when, on arriving, she had met him on the stairs, she had seen his blue eyes light up with ready admiration, and she had soon become aware that he was her devoted, adoring slave.

Horace, in truth, loved her honestly and heartily, wooed her with a passionate ardour that carried the girl away almost in spite of herself.

This surely was love, she told herself, as she listened to his fervent speeches and caught his ardent glances.

Clinton's feeling for her could not have been very deep, or he would not so easily have resigned her.

The brothers were singularly alike in the strength and depth of their emotions, but in the manner in which they affected them they varied greatly.

Clinton, whatever he might suffer, would do so silently and uncomplainingly; Horace, on the contrary, was the slave and plaything of his passions; if he wanted a thing, he must have it, did he risk Heaven and earth to obtain it.

Thus he had set his heart on winning Leila, and he resolved to do so even in spite of herself.

"You do love me, you must love me!" he reiterated, in answer to her protestations that she did not care enough for him; you care for no one else, and in time such love as mine must win its reward. Only say you will be my wife!"

He allowed himself at length, though against her inclination, to be swayed by his unwavering tenacity, and consented to his wishes.

If at that moment a pair of dark grey eyes rose reproachfully before her, as though urging her to consider the cost of her promise, she persistently banished the vision.

"I should not like to have you for my sister." The words spoken so idly rose to Clinton's recollection when, a few days later, he received Horace's epistle, brimming over with love and happiness, and proud triumph in the prize he had won.

"I am sure you will be glad to hear my news, dear old fellow," ran the letter; "for you have often told me that the only thing to tame me was to marry and settle down. It is no use my trying to expiate on my happiness; you know her, and can understand what a lucky fellow I am.

"How you missed failing in love with her yourself passes my comprehension, save that you are such a confoundedly cold, old bachelor. However, I am very glad you did not, for I should have had no chance against you, and I know I should have loved her under any circumstances. If I could not have won her I know I should have done something desperate, for life would have been worthless."

Every word was a dagger thrust, and as Treherne laid down the letter his face was pale as death with the emotion that almost overpowered him.

"So," he muttered to himself, "he has won her. Well, I am not surprised. What a lesson in humility it should be for me!" and a bitter smile curled his lips. "I, who had been told could win any woman I chose to favour, to be rejected by a little country maiden."

He rose from his chair and paced the room with hasty, agitated footsteps.

"I am cold, am I? Heavens, my veins seem to have been on fire since I knew her. I, too, might feel inclined to do something desperate, save that men must live their lives, however worthless and barren they may be. I might have won her if I had wooed her differently, but I did not think that flattering speeches were the sole road to woman's heart."

"May she be happy, my bright, winsome,

little Leila; may he know how to make her so, though I doubt his being suited to her."

It was long ere he could compose himself to write a calm, kind reply to his brother's letter. How little when Horace and Leila perused it did they guess the suffering it had cost the writer!

Clinton was in a measure right. Horace was not well suited to Leila. She wanted a man who would rule her, not, be it understood, harshly and tyrannically, but with a firm, tender hand; and Horace, who could not govern himself, was not the man who was able to do this.

Then, not being in love with him herself, she grew tired of his eternal lovemaking; she wearied of his pretty speeches, when she could make none in return; it did not cause her any special gratification to be continually told she was perfect.

She discovered now that those disputes with Clinton, that figurative breaking of lances, when each had tried to subdue the other, had not been without charm.

But she had taken the decisive step, and she would not draw back; she even seemed anxious to make it irrevocable, for she offered no opposition to Horace's wish that the marriage should take place in two months' time. She blindly shut her eyes to the consequences of what she was doing; a kind of torpor seemed to possess her, which did not allow her to look beyond the present.

There was nothing to wait for. Horace was possessed of ample means of his own, and the match was in every way as good a one as Mrs. Fortescue could have hoped her daughter to make.

Jack, who had returned to town some time since, leaving Horace to pursue his love-making, wrote his congratulations, promising to return for the wedding. Florrie was not behindhand in wishing her sister joy, but she added one of her characteristic speeches which caused Leila to wince.

"Of course, Horace is a nice fellow, and very handsome, and all that sort of thing, but if I had to choose it would be Clinton I should take. I like a man beyond the ordinary—something out of the common run."

Horace, meanwhile, having accomplished all that he had set his heart on, hurried up to town to make some arrangements for his wedding.

CHAPTER IV.

It would be difficult to describe the feelings with which Clinton first met his brother, when the latter joined him at the rooms they shared together. He felt inclined to reject in anger the hand extended to him, to bid him take his bright, handsome face out of his sight for ever, so that it should not mock him with visions of the happiness he had missed.

Horace, as it was, was surprised and puzzled at his cold, constrained manner, for there had always been the most perfect *entente cordiale* between the two.

"I have a message for you from Mrs. Fortescue, Clinton," he said; "she hopes you will return with me and stop for awhile."

"It is utterly impossible," was the curt reply.

"It is not a very gracious way of refusing an invitation," replied Horace, hurt at his tone. "I should have thought it would have been pleasant, now London is thinning so."

"I am not a child to mind being alone. I have numerous engagements, and have no time to waste in the country."

What had come over his brother, pondered Horace, in the midst of his rising irritation. Then an idea suddenly struck him. Clinton, perhaps, thought he ought to have done better for himself than to marry a girl without a penny.

"Do you not approve of Miss Fortescue?" he asked; "do you think I ought to have chosen differently?"

"Are you tired of her already?" was Clinton's answer, with bitter sarcasm; "if you wish to draw back I dare say there is still time."

The taunt stung Horace to the quick. The fiery passions so near the surface rose to life; he dashed down on the table the glass paper-weight with which he had been toying, and sprang to his feet with a bitter oath.

"How dare you speak to me thus?" he said, his blue eyes flaming with anger. "Because I have trifled and played the fool with one or two women would you throw that in my teeth now? What are you to understand of the love I feel for her? I came to you for sympathy and interest, and you meet me with your vile sneers and innuendoes."

Clinton listened to this outburst without a muscle of his grave, stern face altering, but with a fierce struggle going on in his heart. He longed to retaliate with angry words, to ask his brother how he dare arrogate to himself the right that he was incapable of love. But he feared to betray himself, and it would have been death to him to receive the pity of his successful rival.

He was withal a just man. Horace was not to blame for his misery, and unconscious of the truth, might well feel hurt at his manner of receiving him when he came to him in the flush of his happiness.

"I beg your pardon," he said, quietly, after a moment's pause. "I had no right to speak as I did, but I am worried and out of sorts today, and you must not mind what I say," and he held out his hand to his brother as he spoke.

"Don't think of it any more," said Horace, as he heartily grasped it; life was too bright with him just now for him to bear malice for a few hasty words. "I was sure there was something wrong, and then I have such an infernally bad temper. Well, you always said marriage would improve me, so we will see if you are right. I only wish you would look about and follow my example."

There was silence again for a few minutes; then Horace began to talk of his plans, and informed his brother of the date of the wedding.

"So soon!" involuntarily fell from Clinton's lips.

"So soon!" echoed his brother in surprise. "What is there to wait for? She is willing and I am willing. Have you any objection?"

"None," replied Clinton, briefly.

"Will the day suit you?" proceeded Horace, laughing; "you have always so much on hand that I must consult your convenience."

"I am afraid it is useless on this occasion," said Clinton, "for I fear I shall not be in England at the time you name; Carlton is going abroad for awhile, and has asked me to join him."

"Going abroad!" repeated Horace, gazing on his brother in unfeigned astonishment; "going abroad! Clinton, you cannot mean it! You cannot be so ungracious. What will people say and think if you, my only brother, the only near relation I have, be not present at my wedding?" and he paused in sheer indignation.

"What does it matter what people say?" returned Clinton. "My absence won't affect you at such a time, and I wish you well at a distance as sincerely as near at hand."

"But your absence will affect me," persisted Horace. "I cannot believe you are serious, Clinton. Surely you can join Carlton somewhere; a month or two can make no difference to you who have been abroad so often! You must give me your promise to remain, or I shall certainly otherwise defer the wedding, much disappointment at it will cost me."

To Clinton this was the hardest of all. How could he witness that marriage, see her give herself into another's keeping, hear from her lips the vow that would raise an impassable barrier between them, that would part her from him as surely as if the grave had closed over her?

But what valid excuse could he offer his brother, if he did not wish his secret known? and, after all, it would be only he who would suffer, and one pang more or less, what did it matter?

"It shall be as you wish," he said, quietly, as he rose from his seat and walked to the

window, so that his brother might not see the signs of mental suffering in his face. "If my presence be essential to your happiness you shall have it, Horace."

Horace was delighted at having gained his point.

"What a good fellow you are, Clinton; you always give up to everyone, though I can't believe you were serious in not wishing to see me turned off. Ah, Clinton, how I love her. Do you know I verily believe if I had not won her, or if I thought I should lose her now, I should kill myself!"

Clinton was silent. He was not in the mood to read his brother a homily to the effect that the world would be thinly peopled did everyone take their own lives who failed to obtain the desire of their hearts.

The two months passed quickly away, bringing to Horace the fruition of his dearest wishes, to Leila, a day that all unconsciously she was beginning to dread. But it was too late to draw back, she told herself. Horace loved her so, she could not grieve him; and no doubt it would all come right when she was married and settled down.

But it will be readily understood that feelings such as these were not conducive to peace of mind, and her spirits became variable, and her temper somewhat uneven, so that a man less hopelessly and irretrievably in love than Horace might have found cause for wonder.

Thus the days glided by, days which should have been filled with dreams of bright, joyous anticipations. Florrie evinced far more interest in the wedding proceedings than did the person chiefly concerned. It was she who arranged the bride's trousseau, and was highly indignant at Leila's indifference on the subject of it.

"I declare," she said, "you take it so unconcernedly one would think it was quite an everyday affair to be married."

"You don't want me to lose my head because I am going to have a few new dresses, do you?"

"I thought you were going to gain more than that," was Florrie's answer.

A fortnight before the marriage Horace, who had been again up to London, returned to Leila, not to quit it till he should take his bride with him. He had hitherto stayed at the Fortescues', but this time he took up his quarters at the one hotel the little village boasted. He had endeavoured to persuade his brother to accompany him, but to no purpose, Clinton only consenting to join him three days before the wedding.

The day of his arrival came round at length, and Leila, as she stood before her glass that afternoon preparing for a walk with Horace, began to wonder how he would meet her. Then she fell to speculating how it would have been with her had it been Clinton to whom she was about to plight her troth. She suddenly awoke to the knowledge that her pulses were thrilling in a manner hitherto unknown, and with a shudder she hid her face in her hands as does a person to whom some sudden vision has presented itself on which they dare not dwell.

Horace's voice at that moment summoned her, and she hastily ran down, as though anxious to escape from her thoughts.

"How pale you look, dearest," said her lover, tenderly, as he drew her hand within his arm. "What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing," she answered, hastily. "I wish you would not always be studying my looks. It is so worrying."

Horace did not answer. He saw she was in some way out of sorts, and he sought therefore to amuse and divert her.

"We might go the station and meet Clinton," he said, as they were wending their way home. "We should not have long to wait at the station."

"You can go if you wish," returned Leila, "and I will take advantage of the time to call and see Mrs. Payne. I shall not have another opportunity before—before I go."

"I won't leave you alone, dear."

"What nonsense, Horace. You said you wished to go, and I don't mind being alone."

No a very gracious speech; but Horace would not allow himself to be ruffled by it.

"If Clinton comes by the earlier train I shall not be in time to meet him," he said, "as it is about due now. In that case I shall hurry back, and be waiting for you when you come out of Mrs. Payne's."

Mrs. Payne was the lady who kept the school which Leila had attended. The two parted at the top of the road in which her house was situated, Horace pursuing his road to the station.

Mrs. Payne was out, and Leila, as she came away from the house, pondered on what she was to do.

"I must wait a little while," she thought, "or else he may walk up and down here ever so long. If the train is in when he gets there he will be back soon. I wonder if he knows of the short cut across the fields that brings him just opposite here!"

She sighed as she spoke. It was she who had shown Clinton that short cut across the fields one day when she had gone with him to the station to inquire for a packet he expected. They had been engaged in one of their numerous passages-of-arms all the time, in which, as usual, he had come off victorious.

She paced up and down now in a sort of feverish impatience, not daring to let her thoughts dwell on the one subject to which they would wander. So engrossed was she that she did not perceive a man, who was lying under the hedge, rise and approach her.

"I'll be glad of a copper, if you please, miss."

Leila started violently as the gruff, uncouth voice fell on her ear.

She raised her eyes, and saw a tall, powerful-looking ruffian standing before her.

Though not by any means a nervous girl, and withal accustomed to walk about alone, she felt the position hardly a pleasant one. The road was a lonely one, and there was no one in sight.

To refuse the man she did not like to, though his tone and appearance were not warranted to invite sympathy. She drew forth her purse and handed him two or three coppers.

"Is that all you're going to give me?" he asked, menacingly.

"That is not the way to ask for charity," said Leila, endeavouring to speak with dignity, though her heart was beginning to throb painfully.

"You'd be so polite yourself, I daresay, if you had not tasted a morsel for three days," returned the man, with a jeering laugh. "I'll just trouble you to hand over that purse."

Leila had plenty of pluck, and her spirit rose at this daring effrontery.

"I shall do no such thing," she answered. "I have given you all I intend to, and I will thank you to let me pass," and she tried to walk on, but the man blocked her way.

"Not so fast, young lady," he said. "I advise you to give it up of your own accord, or else I shall have to make you."

"You dare not," answered the girl, drawing herself up and speaking firmly, though her lips paled.

Again he laughed mockingly. "Dare not? You're a spirited one, you are, but you don't come over me; you'd better not measure yourself against me, or you'd chance to get the worst of it," and he came a step nearer as he spoke.

In despair Leila cast her eyes around, there was no one to come to her rescue.

"Give me that purse at once, or I'll do for you," continued the ruffian, with a savage oath, as he drew forth from his pocket a large bludgeon.

Leila stood transfixed with horror, unable to articulate a syllable. The man held it out threateningly and was about to lay a rude grasp on her arm, when of a sudden a hand was laid on her assailant's shoulder and he was flung round into the road—Clinton Treherne stood by her side.

With a half-stifled cry and outstretched hands she turned to him; she met his mournful tender gaze, and a flood of tumultuous emotions seemed let loose in her soul, and to utterly overpower her.

The ground appeared to rock under her, and

everything grew dark before her eyes. She staggered blindly towards him, felt his arms round her, and then all was blank.

He supported her tenderly, feeling a wild pleasure in thus holding her in his arms.

For a few minutes she was his, her head rested on his shoulder, her heart beat against his.

"My darling, my darling," he murmured, as he bent over her, and suddenly a passionate longing seized him to kiss those pale lips so near his own.

Who would know of it, and it would be the first and last time he would taste of the forbidden happiness.

The next moment he was pressing warm kisses on her unresisting mouth. It would seem as though their fervour woke her to consciousness, for she gave a faint sigh and opened her eyes. She saw the impassioned look of love that shone in his, and that look seemed to pass into her soul and with a sudden flash of light to make clear all her bewildered feelings.

At this moment who should appear on the scene but Horace, who, having learnt at the station that his brother had arrived by the train due a few minutes previously, was hastening back to rejoice Leila. Imagine his surprise at beholding his *flame* in a half fainting condition supported in his brother's arms.

It was well that Clinton possessed such control over his emotions or the situation might have been an awkward one. As it was he gently assisted Leila to rise while he said, quietly,—

"You should not allow Miss Fortescue to wander about alone, Horace; she has just had a great fright," and he briefly detailed what had occurred.

In a moment Horace's arms were round her, Horace's voice calling her by every tender name.

"Where is the ruffian?" he asked, turning to his brother, his eyes flashing; "you don't mean to say, Clinton, that you let him escape?"

In good truth, in those moments when Clinton held Leila in his arms, he had totally forgotten about the man, who, not stunned by his fall, had profited by his engrossment to make off.

"I had only one pair of hands, my dear fellow," returned Clinton, finding refuge, as is often the case under strong emotion, in careless speech; "and for the moment they were not at liberty to collar the ruffian."

"Leila, dear, you must try to describe him to me," said Horace, "so that I may give information at the police station. By Jove! I'd shoot him if I came across him."

"You might chance in that case to find yourself in a rather unpleasant position," returned Clinton, sarcastically; "besides which it is to be hoped you don't carry loaded firearms about with you."

Horace laughed.

"No; but I have a pair with me at the hotel which might be put to a worse purpose than braining that ruffian. And now, dear, do you feel able to walk home?" he went on, turning to Leila.

"Quite," she answered. "I don't know how I came to faint. I have never done such a thing before."

They proceeded slowly homewards, Leila leaning on Horace's arm, Clinton walking by his brother's side. His turn was over now, and he felt a blind unreasoning jealousy of Horace as he watched his little airs of proprietorship.

CHAPTER V.

LEILA excused herself from joining the family circle that evening on the plea of a headache, which all felt was not a matter of wonder, though Florrie did remark that "she was surprised, as there was no harm done, that Leila should let herself be so knocked over" and thereby drawing down severe rebuke on her from Horace.

But when the next morning, on his coming

In to breakfast, she was still absent from table, he felt rather disappointed.

"Tell Leila I shall expect to see her when I return," he said to Florrie. "I am just going into the village to the police-station to know whether they have heard anything of the man."

Leila, meanwhile, had spent the hours of the night and evening previous in hopeless misery. The truth stood revealed at length; it was Clinton whom she loved, and in two days she was to wed Horace. This, then, was the meaning of that fear to scrutinize too closely her heart. Oh! why had she suffered herself to yield to Horace's persuasions?

That she had not been in love with Clinton when he proposed to her was true enough, but without her knowing it she had been, perhaps, on the high road to such a result. In her childish fit of temper she had spoken as she would not otherwise have done; and had he but pursued his suit would have speedily grown to love him, for no woman could have long remained insensible to the charm of Clinton's preference.

"L'absence allument les grandes passions et dégagent les petites," for, rarely till we lose a thing do we value it sufficiently. But Leila chose to feel piqued at his abrupt departure, and would not acknowledge to herself the blank it caused, though it had been that which made her glad to seize at anything that would divert her thoughts. From the moment she had accepted Horace she had been like one in a dream till now, when self-deception was no longer possible.

The steady gaze of Clinton's grey eyes, the low tones of his rich, musical voice thrilled her soul; one of his reproving speeches she felt would please her better than all Horace's words of love. "What was she to do?" she murmured, over and over again, as she paced her room, wringing her hands; "why had she been so blind, so weak?"

It was little wonder that, a prey to such thoughts as these, she should not feel equal to putting in an appearance at breakfast the next morning. When Florrie delivered to her, through the closed door, Horace's message, a sudden thought struck her. She would ask him to defer the marriage for awhile; she would plead illness, anything that would give her time, and she might afterwards be able to break it off altogether. She gave no thought now to the suffering she would cause her lover; she only felt it would be impossible for her to become his wife.

She arranged her dress, bathed her eyes, and went downstairs to await Horace's return in the drawing-room. How quiet, how cheerful the little apartment looked, with its windows opening on to the velvet lawn, the white curtains swaying to and fro in the soft, summer breeze that was laden with the perfume of countless flowers. Could she be the same girl who a few months back had had a heart as light as those summer winds?

Ten minutes, a quarter of an hour passed, and her hitherto courage, born of despair, began to fail her. Horace was not likely to consent to a postponement of the wedding for some flimsy excuse, and how could she tell him the truth, that she did not love him? She sank on her knees by the side of the sofa, and burying her face in her hands, broke into a despairing flood of tears.

"Leila, why are you crying?"

As Clinton's voice fell on her ears she started to her feet, and brushing away her tears, stood there confronting him, her hand pressed to her throbbing heart. It was impossible not to perceive she was the prey to some deep emotion, and Clinton's gaze grew softer as he looked at her.

"What are you in distress about?" he asked, gently. "Can I be of any service to you?"

A wild gleam of hope awoke in her heart. He had loved her; he loved her still, if she could trust to that look she had yesterday seen bent on her; surely if he knew she returned his affection he would bid her in breaking off her engagement. But she could find no words in which to express herself, and she stood before him in silent misery.

"At such a time as this you should be all smiles," he went on, drawing nearer to her. "What can cause a bride to indulge in such tears?"

"It is that, it is that," she murmured in hoarse tones, as she raised her eyes, and Clinton started at the agonized look they bore. "I cannot, oh! I cannot go through with this dreadful marriage."

Neither of them heard a light springy step on the turf outside, saw a man approach the window, the light of love and happiness in his eyes, to start back the next moment when these words fell on his ears, like one who has received his death-blow.

Clinton gazed on her as though doubting the evidence of his ears.

"I cannot help it; I cannot help it," went on Leila, wildly. "I did not know what I was doing, but I see it all now. Oh, if you ever cared for me save me from this marriage."

"Do you know what you are saying?" said Treherne, sternly, and his face did not even soften at her allusion to his affection. "What do you mean by winning Horace's love, by accepting it, and two days before your marriage declaring you cannot carry out the voluntary promise you have given?"

"I do not love him," murmured the unhappy girl, as she hung her head.

What sound was that that broke the summer stillness—surely the hoarse sound of a heart-broken moan.

"You do not love him?" echoed Treherne, his grey eyes flashing. "It is rather late, is it not, to bring forward such an excuse. Why, pray, do you not love him?"

How his masterful tones seemed to subdue her. She stood there before him like a culprit before her judge.

"Child," he went on; "do you mean to spoil his life as you did mine? You had the grace to refuse me on the score of lack of love; why not have been equally frank with him?"

The first part of this speech alone caught her ear. It was true, then, he loved her still; surely he would not let her sacrifice herself! Poor, blind, unreasoning Leila, she had yet to learn that a man's honour may be stronger than his love.

"Ah! I do not blame me," she said, lifting her lovely, tearful eyes to him. "I know I have acted culpably, but it was unconsciously so. I cannot love Horace, because I have learnt to love you."

It was said so pitifully, so pathetically, that it would have touched the heart of a man who was not already in love with her. One can well understand, therefore, how it affected him to whom she was so dear.

Every consideration was, for the moment, obliterated in the overpowering rapture her words caused him; he made a step forward to take her in his arms, the next he paused, fighting fiercely with the temptation that assailed him.

His brother's words flashed across him, "If I were to lose her now I should kill myself."

How could he make his happiness from the wreck of another's life? how could he rob him at the eleventh hour of his promised bride? In what light would the world view such conduct? No, he felt he could never look an honourable man in the face again, the fatal mistake was made, and could not be repaired.

He looked at Leila, who stood with her face hidden, not daring to look up to note the effect of her words. Did she really love him? Would she, too, suffer? Anyhow, it was too late to help her. He came nearer to her, and took one of her cold hands that hung nerveless by her side.

"You do not know what you say," and his voice was cold and forced, with the restraint he put on himself. "You are excited and overwrought. When you are calmed you will perceive you must fulfil your promise to Horace, for you have spoken too late."

His words chilled her to the heart.

"You have then ceased to care for me?" she said, in a stifled tone.

He did not answer, though bent on sacrificing himself and her; he could not frame his lips to a lie.

She looked up with sudden impetuosity, with a last desperate resolve.

"Tell me," she asked, "if I could free myself, would you still say the same?"

His resolution never faltered.

"Yes," he answered quietly, "I should still say the same."

She drew back as though she had received a blow; she turned and walked slowly to the sofa, with hands outstretched like one in a dream, and sank down on it in an agony of self-abasement. He looked at her for a few minutes in silence, with a world of love, pity and despair in his eyes; then feeling he dare not trust himself longer in her presence he softly left the room.

Without in the bright sunshine, nature with her smiling face seeming to mock him in his misery, stood the unhappy spectator of this scene.

In those few minutes Horace seemed to have aged twenty years. At one blow all his bright gracious manhood was shattered; his face was wan and haggard, his blue eyes wore a dull fixed look. She did not love him; she could not marry him; his white lips repeated the words over and over again. The force of the shock seemed to have paralysed the fiery passions that usually broke rein so easily, he felt no anger against his brother; he felt no anger against her; he was only conscious that life was over for him, that a dark cloud had descended on him, which no ray of light could ever brighten.

Leila's repeated asseverations that she did not love him sufficiently had ever failed to impress him greatly, so absorbed was he in his desire to win her.

"If she does not love me as fully as I could desire," he thought, "at least she loves no one else, and my devotion will soon win her."

And now he learnt that her heart was utterly closed to him, that he could never hold a place in it, that all her love was given to another, and that one was his own brother.

He could not give her up, he said wildly to himself; he could not relinquish all that made life worth holding; he might still marry her. Clinton's own words told him he would not dispute his claim, though he had plainly seen his brother loved her too. Marry her! What a poor satisfaction to own the casket, and know the priceless jewel it contained was in another's keeping. Marry her, with the knowledge of her secret standing like a grim spectre between them!

No, that were impossible. And live to see her another's wife, to watch their happiness whilst he stood without in the cold, to know himself pointed at as a discarded lover, that were more impossible still. For him there would be no rest, no peace till the grave closed over his head. Poor Horace! Love such as his, wild, unresisting, knowing no control, yielding to no restraint, is, indeed, a curse to its possessor.

How long he stood there he knew not; at length he stepped forward mechanically and entered the room by the open window. Leila still sat in the same attitude at the further end, her back to the light. She did not hear him enter, and she started violently when he laid his hand on her shoulder.

"Leila."

Still she did not turn her head as she asked, "Do you want anything?"

"No, I am glad to see you down again. I hope you have recovered from your fright of yesterday."

"I do not feel very well."

A silence between them, then Horace spoke again. "Have you no greeting for me, Leila?"

"What do you mean?"

In her present frame of mind his presence seemed to string her nerves to the utmost tension.

He dropped on one knee by her side, and slied his arm round her waist.

"The greeting that a girl usually gives to her lover, dear," he said, and his voice was hoarse from suffering, but she was too preoccupied to notice it.

"You are always wanting me to kiss you,

Horace, and it is so absurd," she answered, involuntarily shrinking back.

He saw the action, and it stabbed him to the heart afresh.

"Suppose I ask it as a favour, Leila, and as such for the last time?"

"What do you mean?" she asked again, somewhat startled at his tone.

"What do I mean? In two days, if all goes well, you will be my wife, will you not?" he went on, as though determined, poor fellow, to gauge his misery to the utmost; "in two days you will be mine inexpressibly; I shall have the right then to as many kisses as I wish. Is it not so?"

His words brought her miserable position forcibly before her, and forgetful of his request, she sat as one turned to stone. He rose to his feet with such a look on his face as would have moved the stoutest heart to pity.

"If you will not kiss me, Leila," he said, "at least you will not forbid me to kiss you! Some day, my darling, you may be sorry not to have granted my request."

He stooped and took her in his arms, kissing her with a passion and a fervour that frightened her.

"How cold your lips are!" she said, glancing up at him for a moment; but his face was in shadow as he bent over her, and she could not see it plainly.

"Are they?" he returned. "I may not be quite myself. I am perhaps a little overcome at the prospect—the prospect before me. My darling, if you knew how I loved you, to save you from sorrow I would count my life well bestowed."

He bent again, and pressed one long lingering kiss on her forehead, then he withdrew his arms, and turned away.

"I must leave you now," he said, quietly.

He walked to the window, the fixed look of some desperate resolve plainly visible on his face amidst all the anguish written there. Her refusal to kiss him, her evident shrinking from his embrace, had put the finishing touch to his fevered brain.

At the window he paused for a moment, his eyes resting yearningly on Leila with all the intensity of a last farewell.

"Good-bye!" he murmured, "my darling, good-bye, for ever."

Leila sat there alone for full an hour after, and at length her troubled thoughts grew clearer. She would adhere to her resolution; she would tell Horace the truth, he loved her so well she could not deceive him.

Yes, she would tell him all, suppressing, of course, Clinton's name, and if he would release her from her promise she would go away and hide herself; anything would be better than entering on her new life with such feelings as were now hers.

She determined to seek him at once, lest her courage should again fail her, and she hurried to her room to fetch her hat. As she was crossing the hall on her way out she met Florrie.

"Goodness me!" she exclaimed, "how white you are still! Where are you off to?"

"I am going to the hotel. I want to see Horace," returned Leila, avertting her face.

"I'm not sure that it is proper," said Florrie, looking wise, "for you to call on him, and he was only here a short time ago; I saw him leave. It must be something awfully important if it won't keep. Well, I don't suppose you'll always be in such a hurry to run after each other. I should not be surprised if you'd had your first quarrel this day week."

Florrie finished her oration to the empty air, for Leila had passed out into the garden.

The hotel was not very far distant; it stood back from the road, in some prettily laid-out grounds, through which she hurried as though afraid for one moment to pause, or give herself time to think.

When she reached the entrance she noticed that the hall was full of people, and that a certain air of mystery and excitement seemed to pervade the whispering groups.

On ringing the bell to attract the attention of

one of the functionaries she found herself of a sudden the centre of observation.

"Is Mr. Horace Treherne in?" she asked, failing utterly to understand the meaning of the prolonged and sympathetic scrutiny of which she was the object, unless, it suddenly occurred to her, that like Florrie they did not think it proper for her to call on her betrothed.

The man she addressed made no answer, but looked at her in a hopeless, bewildered manner that, in her frame of mind, irritated her in no small degree.

"If so, will you tell him at once that Miss Fortescue wishes to speak to him," she went on in a dignified way.

"Indeed, miss, but I think, I think—" stammered the man, "you'd better go home. They will send to tell you."

Leila gazed at him in blank astonishment, and was about to ask him for an explanation when, at that moment, she perceived Clinton Treherne descending the stairs.

One or two of the group went up to him and whispered something that evidently had reference to herself.

She stood motionless, her heart beginning to throb with painful apprehension as she saw him making his way slowly towards her.

When he drew near she started in affright, for his face was white as death, and there was a look of horror in his eyes that froze her blood.

In silence he drew her hand within his arm, and led her into a small private sitting-room at the end of the passage, which he and his brother had engaged for their use.

But even when they were alone Treherne did not seem able to find speech.

He sank into a chair, and hiding his face in his hands groaned aloud.

"Clinton, oh! Clinton! for Heaven's sake, tell me what it is!" gasped Leila, every vestige of colour leaving her cheek. "I cannot bear this suspense."

He raised his head, and as he did so his glance fell on a letter lying on the table in his brother's handwriting, which neither of them had before perceived.

With a stifled exclamation he caught it up, and Leila, guessing that his overpowering distress must have reference to Horace, leant over him as he tore it open.

She had hardly read over him for a moment ere a wild scream broke from her; she threw up her hands to her head as though her reason were deserting her, and the next instant dropped senseless at Clinton's feet.

CHAPTER VI.

LIKE one in a dream Clinton raised Leila from the ground, and placed her tenderly on the couch.

He watched over her till he saw some faint signs of returning consciousness; then he took up again the fatal letter, and with that look of horror deepening in his eyes, and his face wan and drawn with anguish, he read on to the end.

These were the words which, written in irregular, illegible characters, seemed to burn themselves into his brain.

"Clinton, I know all. When I tell you I overheard your interview with Leila this morning you will understand me. When you read these lines I shall be dead, for I cannot live to face the misery before me. I do not blame you, for it seems you loved her before I knew her. I do not blame her, for I know she would not have wilfully deceived me. I love her so dearly that I will not stand in the way of her happiness, but I cannot live to see another man possess the priceless treasure on which I had set all my hopes. Life is valueless without her; I have not the courage to face the dreary years uncheered by her love and companionship. Let no thought of me cloud her future; let me at least think that my death will take away all barriers between you. You who love her so dearly can pity and forgive me. May Heaven, in whose pre-

sence I shall soon stand, be merciful to me, too!"

—HORACE.

It was even so. Horace Treherne, mad with grief and despair, had taken his life with his own hand. Barely an hour since Clinton had been summoned to his brother's room by the sacred authorities of the hotel, the unfortunate young man having been found a few minutes previously dead in his chair, a pistol lying on the ground at his feet.

The shock of grief and horror had at first utterly paralysed Clinton, but he speedily became aware that there was no time yet for indulging in personal sorrow. A word that was passing from lip to lip roused him and made him conscious that there was work to do in the present which would need all his energies.

There seemed but one conclusion to arrive at—suicide; and that was the word that made him thrust aside with an iron hand the agony of emotion that almost overpowered him—that conjured up thoughts that froze his blood with horror.

The keynote to the dreadful mystery he held in his hand now; the dreadful doubt was certain, and how could he fight against the overpowering testimony!

"Oh! Heaven have mercy on his soul!"—the words fell from his white and quivering lips as he raised his eyes. "Pity and pardon him, my poor unhappy boy!"

A cold touch on his arm startled him; looking round he saw Leila, recovered from her swoon, kneeling by his side.

"It is not true, is it?" she said, in hoarse tones. "It is surely some horrible dream that I had!"

Her glance fell on the letter that Clinton still held in his hand, and another cry of anguish broke from her.

"Oh, Heaven! it is too true!" she moaned. "He is dead, and I am his murderer! How can I bear it—how can I bear it!"

Clinton's heart bled with pity as he raised the unhappy girl.

"Leila," he said, in low impressive tones, "try and listen to me for a moment. You must command yourself; you must let no one hear such words as you just spoke. This letter must remain a secret between us for ever; no one must know the real truth. You can understand, can you not, what I wish to avert?"

She was too dazed, too grief-stricken, to take in the full significance of his words, but now, as ever, she instinctively yielded to his force of will.

To him, however, was present the terrible ordeal that must be gone through, the wonder, the speculation, the suspicion that had to be confronted, and which would wring his sensitive soul.

Let us pass lightly over the events of the next few days. The quiet little village seemed shaken to its foundation by the tragedy that had taken place, and deep was the sympathy for all whom it touched, especially for the unhappy young lady who had been thus bereft of her lover two days before her wedding.

What was the truth of the dreadful mystery? was asked on all sides. What could induce a man to commit suicide, if such it was, with such a fair prospect opening before him? Had the consequences of some early folly confronted him on the threshold of his new life, and he had felt himself unable to face them? Or had some monetary difficulty suddenly overwhelmed him?

These and other questions were asked at the inquest, to all of which Clinton replied emphatically in the negative. His brother was in no embarrassment of any sort, and was about to marry the young lady of his heart and choice. How did he come to be in possession of firearms? His brother Clinton stated that he had intended taking his wife for a long tour abroad, to all out-of-the-way places, and he had heard him say, laughingly, that there was no knowing what adventures they might encounter, so it was well to be prepared for any emergency. His brother, Treherne continued, was proverbially careless; he must have been trifling with the pistol, for

getful that it was loaded, as it must have gone off by accident. He had parted from him only two hours previously, when he had been in the highest and best of spirits.

In fact, all influence was used to bring about a verdict of "accidental death," which was at length accorded. Treherne breathed more freely; the world would never know the dreadful truth.

The day of poor Horace's funeral dawned cold, for the time of year, wet and dreary, a fitting morning to witness the last sad ceremonial of a life so tragically closed. The mourners were few, the brothers had no near relatives; there was Jack, and one or two old friends of the poor fellow's who had been staying in the village to assist at his wedding.

Clinton felt as though he were in some horrible nightmare, as he stood there by his brother's grave, as though hope and courage and energy were killed within him for ever. Before him rose Horace's bright handsome face, with his laughing blue eyes. He pictured him as he had seen him that day, not so far distant, when he had told him of his happy love, and then he seemed to hear again those reckless words that had come so true.

As these thoughts all coursed through his mind, Treherne groaned aloud in bitterness of heart as he hid his face in his hands, and inwardly prayed to be forgiven whatever share he had had, however innocent, in bringing about this dreadful tragedy.

In the afternoon of that same day Treherne called at Mrs. Fortescue's to pay his adieu, as he was leaving in the evening for London. He had not seen Leila since the day of Horace's death, but he had heard how she had remained almost ever since in a kind of stupor, never speaking a word, refusing to eat, only moaning continually.

"I don't know what to do with her," said poor Mrs. Fortescue, her tears flowing freely. "I don't think what may be the consequences of the shock. I got her down to the drawing-room to-day in hopes of rousing her a little, but I don't think it's of any use."

"Might I see her?" asked Treherne, hesitating.

"Yes, certainly; it may do her good if you can get her to attend to you," and she led him to the drawing-room and shut him in with her alone.

Leila, who was sitting in an arm chair at the farther end, never moved at the sounds. The blind had been turned to admit some light, and it fell on her as she sat there, her white hands folded in her lap in a drooping attitude.

Treherne involuntarily started back. What a terrible change had these few days made in her appearance!

Was this the girl whose bright bewitching beauty had, even in her photograph, taken his heart captive at once?

For the moment he forgot the recent terrible events. He only saw he was suffering cruelly—he only knew that he loved her and longed to comfort her. The next moment his arms were round her.

"Don't touch me!" she said, in hoarse tones. "Don't come near me! Have you forgotten that I am the cause of his death—that I broke his heart and blotted his life! Oh, Heaven!" she went on, lifting dull, haggard eyes, "how can I bear it, how can I bear it!"

"Leila, my poor child!" said Treherne, "I know how terrible it must be to you, but you must try to bear up. You must not take such blame to yourself."

She went on as though she had not heard him.

"I hear his voice in my ears always reproaching me; I see him how he was, and how he must have looked afterwards; I know that never in all the long years to come shall I feel at peace with myself!"

She put her hands to her head as though her brain reeled beneath its weight of suffering.

"Leila," said Treherne, speaking in firm, decisive tones, which commanded attention, "you must not give way to such thoughts. If you did wrong it was unintentional, and you were going to try to repair it. You could not tell that he

would overhear us—that, poor fellow, his love would lead him so astray! Does he not say in his letter that no blame attaches to you, and what there is I must share with you; for had I been less proud, less arbitrary, I might have taught you sooner to know your own heart!"

His words seemed to have some effect on her, for the wild look faded from her eyes.

"My heart," she repeated, sadly, "I think my heart is dead; it is only filled with a great loathing, and a great horror of myself. Clinton, we must not meet after to-day; between us there lies a grave—his grave that must separate us for ever."

It was no time for arguments, of that he was well aware, and at that moment he had no inclination to use them.

"It shall be as you wish, Leila," he said, gently, as he rose to leave, feeling there was no use in prolonging the interview. "I am leaving here to-day, as you shall not see me again till you can do so without pain. Good-bye, dear, and Heaven bless you, and help you to bear your trouble bravely."

He took her in his arms as he spoke, and kissed her gravely and tenderly. That kiss was her salvation; it seemed to loosen the terrible pressure on her aching heart and brain.

She gave a great gasp, and burst into an overpowering flood of tears, the first she had shed since that terrible day.

Treherne knew how they would relieve her, and he did not attempt to soothe her; he placed her gently on the sofa, and with one parting look left her to herself.

Six years have passed away, bringing in their train some changes. Florrie had married, and had a young family growing up round her.

Jack had also entered the holy state of matrimony. He had been fortunate enough to win the affection of a young lady with a considerable fortune of her own, and influential friends who could materially advance his interests.

Leila was with her mother still, not at L——. The place, with its haunting memories of happiness and sorrow, became odious to her, and soon after the events above related they had moved nearer to London.

These years had left their mark on Leila. Her beauty was not materially lessened, but the sparkling vivacity, the bright mobility of feature that had been her great charm, had vanished.

On her pensive brow, in the depths of her dark eyes, one read a tale of suffering endured that even to strangers appealed to their sympathies.

The bright, careless, capricious girl of the commencement of our tale had for ever vanished; she was a saddened remorseful woman, who felt she could never atone sufficiently for that youthful error that entailed such grievous consequences.

But sorrow and suffering had done for Leila what perhaps prosperity could not have achieved. They had purified and ennobled her whole nature.

She spent her days in caring for others, in succouring all within her reach, who were in distress of any kind; in the little country village in which they lived, and for miles round her name was never mentioned without a blessing.

Of Clinton Treherne she had seen nothing for years. Shortly after poor Horace's death he had accepted a Government appointment abroad, and he had been absent until now.

Before his quitting England they had met once, but no word of their mutual love had passed between them.

He had just resigned his post, and only this morning, when we gather up the final threads of our story, Leila had received a letter from him informing her of his arrival in town, and of his intended visit to her and her mother.

She sat now in the shady garden with the letter still in her hand, studying the firm, decided characters, feeling her pulses thrill at the thought of meeting him again.

"But that must never be," she murmured, as she pressed her hand to her tired eyes. "I have

no right to be happy. And who knows, perhaps he does not wish it now."

The sound of footsteps fall on her ears. Looking up, she saw Clinton Treherne making his way across the lawn.

As she rose to her feet to greet him the memory of another summer's day, long years ago, rushed over her, the day when he had come to seek her, and had asked her so unexpectedly to be his wife.

The next moment their hands had met, and each was studying in silence the changes these years had made in the other. Treherne was in what, with men, is called their prime, but there were deep lines in his face, and a sprinkling of grey in his dark hair that should belong to a man more advanced in years.

His eyes, with their look of settled melancholy, dwelt tenderly on the chastened beauty of Leila's face, that face which through all these weary years had never been absent from his thoughts.

He was the first to break the silence, and as his low, soft tones fell on her ear she felt herself transported back to days gone by.

"Are you glad to see me, Leila?"

"You know how glad," she answered, in a voice barely above a whisper.

He put his arm round her and drew her back to the seat she had just vacated. He loved her then still, for a minute the delicious thrill of delight effaced all other thoughts.

"Leila," he went on, softly, "do you know what I have come for?"

She hid her face in her hands.

"Oh, Clinton, it can never be; you must not tempt me. I should feel as though I had compassed his death to win my happiness."

"Heaven forgive me if I do wrong," he answered; "but I cannot think it is so. One life has been sacrificed; is that not enough?"

She made no answer, but her whole frame shook with suppressed sobs.

"Leila, my dearest," he went on, "these years of suffering, of sorrow, will surely be accepted as atonement for the wrong you unwittingly did. Do you think he would wish his rash act to cloud your whole life? I am sure, could he speak to you, he would bid you come to me. Leila, shall we mourn him less together than apart?"

She does not withstand his persuasions, her heart is pleading too strongly in his favour. Her head sinks on his shoulder and their lips meet in one long, lingering kiss.

My story is ended. In their mutual love and trust they were happy, but over their lives there rests a shadow that not even that love can wholly dissipate.

[THE END]

PROMPTNESS.—Half the value of anything to be done consists in doing it promptly. And yet a large class of persons are almost always more or less unpunctual and late. Their work is always in advance of them, and so it is in their engagements. They are late in rising in the morning, and in going to bed at night; late at their meals; late at the counting-house or office; late at church; late at their appointments with others. Their letters are sent to the post-office just as the mail is closed. They arrive at the wharf just as the steamboat is leaving. They come into the station just as the train is going out. They do not entirely forget or omit the engagement or the duty, but they are always behind the time, and so are in haste, or rather in a hurry, as if they had been born a little too late, and for ever were trying to catch up with the lost time. They waste time for themselves, and waste it for others, and fail of the comfort and influence and success which they might have found in systematic and habitual punctuality. A good old lady, who was asked why she was so early in her seat in church, is said to have replied that it was part of her religion not to disturb the religion of others. And if it were with all a part both of courtesy and duty, not to say of religion, never to be unpunctual, they would save time for, as well as annoyance to others, and aid themselves to success and influence in a thousand ways.

This world is the great tempter; but at the same time it is the great monitor. It stimulates our pride by its pomp and show, its fleeting honours and prizes; it goads men to the race, and inspires them with covetousness and rapacity; but, on the other hand, it is the great memento and evidence of its own vanity and of the emptiness of everything it offers to us. It is the great seducer, the great warden, the great prophet.

SOMEONE who had an insight into human nature once said, "To treat men as if they were better than they are is the surest way to make them better." It would be an excellent thing for us all if we not only recognise this truth by the light of reason, but infused it in our daily practice. On the contrary, most of us appear to go upon the opposite principle. Whether it is that our minds dwell so much upon other people's failings that they are magnified in our view, or whether we fancy that they need a deeper conviction of the enormity of their misdeeds to lead them to better things, certain it is that, so far from generally treating men as if they were better than they are, we usually treat them as if they were a little worse. And it is just because we do this so constantly and so unconsciously that we need special watch and care against it.

FOR MAN AND WIFE.—The instinct towards meanness and beauty dies hard in womankind, but it can be utterly destroyed by the slow process of discouragement and the fact that nobody cares. The truth is that human beings need not only to see cleanliness, but to see variety and freshness and change; and the house-cleaning should be no more an object of pleasure and interest to the woman than to the man. There is much that she can do without him. She can scrub the floor, but he could and should whitewash the ceiling. She cannot paper the walls, perhaps, though many a farmer's wife has done even that; but give her the money, and she will buy the paper and find some one to hang it. After her willing hands have scrubbed away last year's fly specks any man who can handle tools can make the frames for screens for her windows and doors. If, besides this, he buys the prepared paints, and little by little gives a fresh coat to the various rooms, it is no more than his share of the task.

A DOG'S YAWN.—Did you ever watch a dog yawn? For thoroughness and entire absence of affection and mock shame-facedness there is nothing like it. When a dog gapes he doesn't screw his face into all sorts of unnatural shapes in an endeavour to keep his mouth shut with his jaws wide open. Neither does he put his paw up to his face in an apologetic way while gaping in anguish, as it were. No, sir; when he gapes he is perfectly willing that the whole world shall come to the show. He braces himself firmly on his fore feet, stretches out his neck, depresses his head, and his jaws open with graceful moderation. At first it is but an exaggerated grin, but when the gape is apparently accomplished, the dog turns out his elbows, opens his jaws another forty-five degrees, swallows an imaginary bone by a sudden and convulsive movement, curls up his tongue like the petal of a tiger lily, and shuts his jaws together with a snap. Then he assumes a grave and contented visage, as is eminently becoming to one who has performed a duty successfully and conscientiously.

HAVE A SYSTEM.—It is astonishing how much time people lose for want of system. A girl rises, dawdles about dressing, gets late for breakfast, and then the best part of the day is done. A young fellow has finished his work; he idles about with a few friends, and before he knows it, it is past nine o'clock, and the evening is practically wasted. Any quantity of work can be crammed into a lifetime if there is only organisation and application. No matron or maid, sitting down, for instance, to make a knitted counterpane, could do the work at one sitting; but a quarter of an hour's work every day would accomplish the whole task, long as it is, in a few weeks. The minutes, too, have an odd trick of slipping away so swiftly that, if they are not caught, and applied to a good purpose, they are wasted in a manner which

leaves ten years periodically blank. The young husbands who come home in the evening and grow sulky because their wives are untidy, and the fireplace dirty with the day's ashes, and who are told by their spouses that there has been "so much to do" that time "tidying up" could not be found, may make sure that system is lacking somewhere. The heaviest day's work can be got through, either by the fireside on the wife's part, or out-of-doors on the husband's side, if time is only taken by the forelock, everything began early, and everything, too, systematically carried out.

HOW SHE PLEASED HER HUSBAND.—The next best thing to pleasing a man's stomach is for his wife to dress up a bit for his special benefit; he is so hungry that it would need but a spark to kindle a flame; but when he wearily enters and sees the appetizing dinner in the act of being dished, his little woman smiling, neat and tidy, it acts upon him like a dose of soothing-syrup. The dust might be an inch thick on the mantelpiece, he would not see it; broken crockery and cobwebs might fill every corner, he would look upon them with all the complacency imaginable, and not attempt their annihilation. While washing he tells his wife how pretty she is, how becoming her hair is, arranged in that fashion, says no other man has such a dear love of a woman for a wife; asks what she has for dinner that smells so good, and, though he is really starving, waits upon the table with the grace and politeness of a Chesterfield, and selects the best of everything for his little wife's plate. During meal time he tells her all about his work, asks her advice in regard to his plans, tells funny stories, propounds conundrums, and renders the dinner hour a very enjoyable time. After it is over he is doubly amiable with his wife, plays with the children, sings comic songs, and next morning goes off to his work whistling merrily, at peace with all the world, thinking he has the happiest home in the land, while the wife says within herself, "What a blessing it is to have such a dear, good, loving husband!"

THE HEIRESS OF WYNDCLIFF.

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CHAPTER XXV.

A WINGED MESSENGER.

But the Prince was nearer his attendant than was the prisoner, and before Carew could reach him had snatched up the sword, whose bare point he presented to Gerard's breast.

"Stand back!" he exclaimed, authoritatively. "The man's arm grew numb through holding the weapon so long in one position; but my arm is neither numb like his, nor bound with fetters like yours. You understand my meaning!" he added, significantly, and Carew resumed his former position, understanding it only too well.

The Prince waited for his servant to recover, then handed back the sword, and resumed his narrative, which he seemed to have a certain amount of satisfaction in telling.

"I installed my sister at the 'Rookery,' and then took up my abode with the Wyndcliffs," he continued, still leaning against the wall opposite Gerard, "and I soon found out that there were secret passages in the Castle, though it took me some time to discover their whereabouts. From the very first I believed the jewels had been hidden by the Rance somewhere within the building, and finally I succeeded in finding the secret passage which communicated with the vaults through the muniment room. Oddly enough, before I could make much use of my knowledge Elaine Wyndcliff herself was seized with almost the same idea as my own. By dint of administering a sleeping draught to Sir Richard I took an impression of a key he wore attached to a chain round his neck—the key of the dead chest; but before I could get a duplicate made Elaine opened the

chest, and took from it certain important papers relating to her grandfather and his wife.

"I happened to meet her in the passage when she was passing through with these documents, and I read the label on one packet through a looking-glass. Of course, my object then was to prevent her from perusing these papers before I had seen them, and I had to invoke the aid of Heera in this dilemma, for, to my great annoyance, Sir Richard was ill, and asked me to sit up with him that night. However, Heera contrived to enter the Castle through the muniment room, and medicated some flowers which Mr. Transome had sent up to Miss Wyndcliff, with the result that Elaine slept extra soundly that night, and Heera was able to take the papers from under her pillow without her being any the wiser. By some means, however, a fragment of writing had dropped out of the packet, and this my sister unfortunately overlooked. However, as matters turned out, it did not make much difference, for in the papers we had secured we found ample evidence that the jewels had been hidden in the vaults by the Rance's directions. She was, it would seem, of an extremely jealous disposition, and could not bear the idea of the jewels being possessed by another woman.

"She had no daughter by Sir Richard Wyndcliff, and her son was at that time very delicate. It seemed likely enough he would not reach manhood, and in that case the title and estates would have passed to a distant cousin, whose wife the Rance hated virulently.

"Her husband, too, seemed to have some superstitious dread of the jewels, with which she had probably imbued him, for she was quite well aware of the curse that attached to any possessor of the sacred ruby. And so, to make a long story short, he had buried the jewels with her, after first embalming her body in a manner that she herself must have taught him, for it is a method only known in the East, and there you have an explanation of the whole mystery.

"I need hardly tell you that on the night Heera lured you to the Rookery I transacted certain other matters connected with my purpose, and then returned to the Castle through the muniment room. I think, Mr. Gerard Carew, you will hardly deny that I have scored above you all along the line!"

He laughed aloud with mocking triumph. It had indeed been very sweet to him to show Carew how entirely successful he had been in his scheme—a fact which Carew could not deny, since it was so palpably evident even in the situation the two men now occupied with regard to each other.

It will be noticed that Hilliard had carefully refrained from mentioning the part Elaine had played in the discovery of the diamonds. To confess that would have been to admit how much chance had favoured his machinations, and his desire was to impress his listener with the belief that he had achieved his victory simply by superior skill.

As he finished speaking he waved his hand in an sarcastic farewell, and prepared to take his departure.

Carew started to his feet with the determination to hurl himself upon his tormentor, but before he could put his design in execution the door of the cell was opened by the servant, and he saw half-a-dozen Hindoos outside, evidently waiting for the Prince.

To make any endeavour to escape under such circumstances would have been madness, and the only result redoubled vigilance on the part of his captors.

Gerard saw this, and sank back in his corner again with a deep groan as the door of the cell closed, and he once more found himself alone.

Deep silence reigned; he could hear the ticking of the watch he wore, and it sounded prettily loud. Each tiny movement of the hands brought his death hour the nearer.

Somehow he had not lost hope before he saw Hilliard; it had seemed possible that the priests might relent, or at least that one of the guards might be bribed, but the knowledge that his capture was due to Prince Nadir, and that he it was who had virtually condemned him to death,

put an immediate end to such hopes. He felt now that his doom was sealed. No effort on his part could alter the fact.

So securely were his hands bound that he could not get his mouth anywhere near them, otherwise he would have tried to gnaw through the ropes with his strong white teeth.

He sprang up and began to pace the cell, whose interior was only just visible in the dim light, and while he walked backwards and forwards like some caged wild animal he measured with his eyes the height of the window, which had no glass, but heavy cross bars of iron. It was high above his reach, the bars would have resisted the efforts of two people equally strong as himself.

No chance that way. His glance turned towards the door, which was also iron clamped, and probably still guarded by the half dozen men he had seen outside when the Prince departed.

And so the weary hours wore on until he judged it must be just before daybreak. As Hilliard had confessed, he was no coward, and yet it must be admitted that never in his whole career had he clung so desperately to life as he did now; never had it seemed to offer such possibilities.

A little more time, a little more luck, and he might not only have freed Elaine but borne her back home in triumph! Now he shuddered at the thought of what her fate might be.

Suddenly he heard a fluttering as of wings at the window, and a second or two later a bright-hued bird flew in through the bars and circled round the room. Something dropped from its beak which proved to be a very tiny, very keen lancet-like blade that glittered as it lay on the floor at Gerard's feet.

He picked it up with his teeth, the bird which had a slender silken cord tied round its foot, meanwhile making its way out into the air again.

The young man's heart beat with renewed hope. Evidently he had some friend outside who had taken this strange method of helping him!

Holding the blade between his teeth, he contrived to lodge it on a little shelving bit of wall where he kept it in place with his foot, and then began fretting the cords with which his wrists were bound backwards and forwards against it. In a very little time one hand was free, and then it took only a few seconds to cut the knots on the other.

Ah, that was better! His courage revived as he found his limbs at liberty, and his next action was to swarm up the wall to the window and look through.

A tree grew close to the building and flung out some of its branches almost to the window itself. Between these branches he could see a large white marble edifice with domes and minarets, which he concluded must be the Rajah's palace. He also caught a glimpse of gardens planted with rare shrubs and ornamented with statues and fountains and artificial lakes of water.

In the distance were groves of orange and mango trees; and even here the perfume of thousands of roses was wafted like a thick cloud of incense.

But not a living creature was in sight.

Naturally Carew could not see immediately beneath the window, as the bars were too close together to permit him to crane his head out. But evidently there was someone below, for a little packet was thrown up to him, which he failed to catch.

The second time he was more fortunate, and on tearing off the paper enclosing the object thrown to him he discovered a file, small, of course, but unusually strong.

At once he understood what was expected of him, and without loss of time began to work swiftly and silently on the bars, casting every now and then quick glances towards the door of his prison.

Once he heard the key turn in the lock, and thick beads of perspiration started on his brow. Instantly he concealed the file and dropped down from his perch, throwing himself into a corner of

the cell, in such a position that his hands were not visible.

A brown face was thrust inside, two glittering eyes fell upon him, then the head was withdrawn, and the door relocked.

"Thank Heaven!" muttered Carew below his breath, as he returned to his task.

No further interruption came until he had filed apart two of the bars, thus leaving an aperture large enough for him to creep through.

As soon as this was accomplished he looked out, and then he saw a darkly-draped figure keeping watch below. He also discovered that the room he had occupied was some forty feet from the ground—too high for him to attempt to jump without running the risk of breaking his limbs.

But no sooner had this difficulty presented itself than it was overcome. The figure below threw up a coiled rope, at the end of which was an iron hook.

This he fixed in one of the remaining window bars, and in another few minutes he had slid down the rope, and stood on terra firma.

Oh, how good it was to feel the soft cool breezes, laden with the scent of roses blow across his brow, to hear the ripple of the water, to breathe in the freshness of the air!

It is to be feared that in these first moments of glorious liberty he almost forgot the person to whom he owed it. It was a woman. She touched his elbow, and put her finger to her lip in token of silence.

"Follow me," she whispered, as she flitted on in front towards the white marble buildings, whose domes Carew had seen from his prison.

For a moment he hesitated. How did he know that it was not her purpose to lead him into another trap?

His first impulse was to get away from her and try to make his escape by his own unaided endeavour from the grounds; but the remembrance of the high wall surrounding the palace, and the many soldiers who would be sure to be on guard round the royal domain, prevented him.

Second thoughts were wisest. He followed his guide un murmuringly.

Keeping close within the shadow of the walls she crossed a grove of flowering shrubs, and entered the palace through a small side door. Then she ascended a narrow staircase, at the top of which her progress was barred by a sentinel.

Carew came to a pause, and thrust his hand inside his tunic to feel his hunting-knife, which he still carried. He was resolved not to be taken prisoner again without a desperate fight for his liberty.

But he was not destined to be put to the test. The woman held out her hand from under her voluminous drapery, and at the sight of a ring she wore the man fell back, and walked to the other end of the passage, while she passed through an ante-room into a second chamber, the door of which she locked as soon as Carew had followed her in.

Then, for the first time, she drew back her veil, and Gerard saw her face.

CHAPTER XXVI.

TRACKED!

It was Hæra, and when she threw off her abounding black cloak Carew observed that she was attired in a superb gown of white satin, thickly embroidered in gold, whose splendour added to her undoubtedly regal appearance.

She looked thinner and more worn than when he had seen her last, as if she had suffered mental or physical pain; but her beauty was undimmed, and Carew could hardly refrain from an exclamation of admiration as she stood in the soft glow of the light confronting him.

"So it is to you, Princess. I owe my escape," he said, after a few moments' silence, during which the two looked fixedly at each other.

"You are speaking too soon; your escape is not yet certain," she interrupted, quickly, and as she spoke she looked round almost as if she feared to meet the glance of prying eyes; "so far all is well; but if your whereabouts is discovered I should be powerless to save you from the fanatical vengeance

of the priests. It will not be safe for you to stay here, either, for it is pretty certain my apartments will be searched when once your absence is noticed."

"Can you not let me outside the grounds of the palace? I could shift for myself then."

She was looking at him anxiously, but she hardly seemed to have heard his last request, and instead of replying to it, she said, abruptly,

"You have seen my brother—Prince Nadir—Hilliard, as you used to call him? Tell me, as briefly as you can, what he said to you?"

Carew complied, and she, after listening very attentively, wrung her hands together as he finished.

"He is hard, hard as iron, and cruel as the grave!" she exclaimed, almost despairingly. "He hates you, too, and would long ago have wreaked his vengeance on you if I had not interfered to prevent it. While we were in England he dared not act in opposition to my wishes, for he depended on my aid in gaining the object of his ambition, but now that he has obtained it—now that the sacred ruby has been restored, and he has been publicly acknowledged as my uncle's heir, he no longer fears to thwart me. And nothing less than your death will satisfy him!"

She let her head fall forward on her breast, and seemed lost in miserable thought. Carew took her hand in his, and raised it to his lips.

"Don't let the thought of my fate distress you so much, Princess. After all, I have brought it on myself. If I had not put such faith in my Hindoo servant, Hassan, I should not have been betrayed thus."

She looked at him rather curiously.

"Do not blame Hassan. What he did was for the best, although he made a mistake. Did he not prove his fidelity to you by saving you from a poisonous snake when you were on the voyage out? The man who placed the cobra in your beth was a spy of Prince Nadir's, and he followed you out from England for the express purpose of taking your life."

"But how do you know all this?"

She seemed to hesitate for a moment, and the heavy fringe of her lids lay on her cheek.

"Because," she said at length—and there was a plaintive sort of appeal in her voice—"I and Hassan are one. Yes, when my brother left England I was ill, and remained behind with a couple of his servants—the same who sailed with us, and one of these tried to murder you. I did not know at the time that he acted in accordance with the Prince's instructions, and when we reached Calcutta and you announced to me your intention of coming to Tagipoor I made all haste to leave you so as to prepare Nadir for your arrival."

She stopped, but Gerard had no difficulty in filling in the rest of the sentence. If her passion for him had been great enough to induce her to take a pince at his servant her jealousy had also been strong enough to make her resolve he should not be allowed to rescue Elaine.

And yet she had risked so much on his behalf! He would have been more or less than man if he had remained untouched by her devotion.

"What words can I find strong enough to convey my gratitude?" he said, in a voice of deep feeling.

"I do not want your gratitude—that is indeed a poor and cold substitute for what I would fain win from you"—and as she spoke she raised her soft, and dark, and clear as stars mirrored in deep waters, and let them rest on his. "Even yet does that fair-haired girl triumph over me!"

A deep flush stained Carew's cheeks. Never surely had man found himself in such a difficult position! His voice was very low when he replied.

"Princess, you yourself once said that Englishmen thought first of honour, and I should be untrue to myself if I were untrue to my best instincts. My honour is pledged to Elaine—what more can I say?"

The love-light slowly faded from her eyes, and was replaced by one still more stormy. It was easy to see that she was in the throes of anguished indecision—love, jealousy, and remorse all pulling her different ways.

On the one hand she saw the man she adored



"IF YOU KNOW WHAT HAS BECOME OF CAREW, HEERA, BE WISE AND TELL ME," SAID THE PRINCE.

betrayed by her own indirection, on the other to release him meant giving him up for ever—perhaps to her rival.

Such moments as those that followed sear the conscience like red hot iron. Still she knew the terrible fate that awaited Gerard if she deserted him, and in the end the more womanly part of her nature conquered—she would save him if she could.

But while she hesitated there came the quick sound of footsteps in the marble passages outside her apartments, and a knock at the door was followed by an imperative summons for admittance.

"It is Nadir!" she whispered. "If he finds you here we are lost!"

She picked up the drapery she had worn when she stood outside the prison walls, and threw it over Carew, then she beckoned him forward into the next apartment, and opened a door concealed under the hangings.

"Stay there," she exclaimed, quickly, "until I have a chance to release you."

The knocking was repeated—evidently the person outside brooked no delay. When at length Heera unfastened the door her brother entered, and cast a swiftly suspicious glance around.

"Are you alone?"

"Certainly I am. Whom should I have with me?" she demanded, in tones equally haughty as his own, while her eyes met his unfalteringly.

"Carew has escaped," went on the Prince, apparently only half satisfied by her denial. "He seems to have got through the window; but how he reached the ground is a mystery, unless, indeed, he had a confederate."

"Perhaps he had," she rejoined, carelessly—for she added to a Western education all the arts of Eastern duplicity. "It is possible he bribed one of the guards."

"No. I provided against that contingency. It was some one outside who aided him. Still, although he has escaped from the building it is quite impossible he can have left the grounds,

for all the approaches are closed, and sentries are placed near them. My impression was I might find him within the palace—if he is here, it is quite certain his recapture is only a matter of time."

He looked significantly at his sister as he spoke, and she saw that he was by no means satisfied with her denial. She turned to him passionately.

"Why do you not let the man go? He saved my life, remember."

"And you saved him—so in that matter you are quits. The Prince came a step nearer, and seized her delicate wrists, as if he would compel her attention. "Don't you understand that this man is dangerous—that he hates me, and will never rest until he has either rescued Elaine or avenged her? It was your fault that I brought the girl to India with me—it would have been better if we had left her in the vaults in England. Dead women tell no tales."

Heera shuddered.

"I could not bear the idea of having her death on my hands. Recollect, the same blood flows in our veins."

"What has that to do with it? She was a source of danger, and it behoved us to remove her. It is true she has helped us a great deal since her arrival in Tagipoor, but she is still dangerous—at least, so long as Carew survives. Don't you understand that in abducting a young English lady we have committed a crime against the great English Government, and that it has but to stretch out its mighty hand in order to crush us?"

Heera looked a little startled. This aspect of the question had not struck her, and she immediately saw its significance.

"So long as no one knew of Elaine's identity it did not matter," went on Nadir; "but each British subject has a right to British protection, and if Carew be permitted to escape, even though he does not set eyes on Elaine, he will invoke the aid of the great white queen, whose army will crush us as it has crushed most of our neigh-

hours. It is true we might put it out of their power to find Elaine alive, but that would avail us nothing. I tell you our safety, and the safety of our kingdom, depends on Carew's death. He is the only person who can bring actual proof against us—his friend Leslie is a mad cap whose word, unsupported, would go for nothing at all, but he himself is of quite a different calibre. If you know what has become of him, Heera, be wise and tell me."

"I do not know," she answered, doggedly. "In that case I must have your apartments searched."

She turned upon him in proud amaze.

"You surely would not put such an indignity upon me!"

"I would not if I could help it; but unfortunately you leave me no alternative," was his cool response. "As a master of fact, I know that you have aided him. Heera, for in his cell was found a feather from the wing of your tame parakeet, showing that you must have made use of the bird either to convey a note or for some other purpose. In any case I am convinced you have directed him to a hiding place, and I am resolved to find it."

He clapped his hands, and at the signal three or four armed men entered the apartment.

(To be continued.)

CUPID.—A party leads to an introduction. Then a proposal and engagement. And all this time Cupid has been playing his deadly game with people who have seen each other only in their company manners. When the young couple are face to face with a household care or two—when the fresh-complexioned girl gets pale and wan—when things go awry at the counting-house and there is a wet day at home, company manners fly away. It is never too late to think over it twice while everything has to be done. When all is settled it is too late to begin again at the start.



"THERE WAS SOMEONE I FANCIED I LIKED," MARJORY SAID, SIMPLY.

A GREY DAWN.

—10—

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE is something peculiarly dull and desolate about the hours between midnight and the dawn; those who know nothing of the "small hours" except occasionally spending them at some gay dance or other festive gathering have no idea of the cold weird sensation one feels if sitting up in ordinary attire and ordinary surroundings through that earliest beginning of the new day.

Agnes Gordon was not a romantic woman nor a sensitive one, but as she started up at the sound of her brother's latch key a shiver ran through her, she felt bitterly cold, cold with a chill quite apart from that natural to February.

The fearful stillness which had been broken only by that sound of Andrew's key turning in the lock seemed almost to have paralysed her; she rose it is true, but she stood motionless; she could not go to her brother; it dawned on her suddenly that he might have relented towards his wife, and be inclined to reproach Agnes for leaving her alone all those weary hours.

Agnes stood there and waited; would he come into his consulting-room, or go upstairs to his wife, or what? She had not a long suspense; a moment or two at most and the handle of the door was turned.

Andrew came in looking a little more tired even than was his wont when returning from night visits, pale, haggard, and with an expression on his face his sister had never seen there before.

"You should not have waited up," he said, shortly. "Of course Doris is in bed!"

"Hours ago," replied Agnes, her anger reviving that his first thought should be of his wife.

"I hope, Andrew, you intend to tell her plainly what you think of her conduct."

The Doctor faced round and looked at his sister with a steady gaze. He might be careless and leave power in Agnes' hands from the mas-

line dread of a scene, but he was true to the core; when he saw his duty he was not one to flinch from it.

In his lonely watch by what proved to be a death-bed he had held communion with his own heart; he knew the truth now, he had broken his vow to Doris, he had not "cherished" her, he had not "protected" her, he had simply let her alone to starve her poor heart in a dull, dreary home where no one cared for her.

"Before we blame Doris," he said, sternly, "we must look at home; is it not our fault—yours and mine—that she was driven to seek companionship outside this house? If we had been kinder to her, poor little thing, she would not have been so ready to form intimacies unknown to us."

"You cannot mean that you defend her? that you actually approve of your wife holding clandestine meetings with her lover?"

Andrew recoiled as though she had struck him.

"Don't," he said, hoarsely, "don't judge her like that; you don't know that the man was anything but an old friend."

"She had ample chance to defend herself," said Agnes, coldly; "but she did not attempt to do. She seemed to glory in her ill-deeds."

"Be honest," commanded her brother, gravely; "all we know is that Mrs. Ferrers saw Doris several times at the Crystal Palace in company with a gentleman whom she supposed to be her brother."

"And is not that scandalous?"

"Indiscreet, not scandalous. Doris was dull and unhappy here, poor girl; she may have met this man the first time by pure accident, and if he was an old friend it would seem like a renewing of old times. He would tell her of Marjory Ward, and they would talk of the days when she thought herself the Major's daughter; he would press her to see him again."

"Shameful of them both."

"Wrong of him," admitted Dr. Gordon, "but only imprudent of her." She was not happy

here you see, Agnes, and she would naturally catch at any chance of distraction."

"You have changed your mind," said his sister, sharply; "you seemed angry enough with her at first."

"I was angry," he said, slowly, "and I am troubled now. I don't expect you to understand, Agnes, but I love my wife. I may not be good at making speeches or paying compliments. I know I seemed to neglect her, but this business has taught me the truth. I love Doris with every fibre of my heart."

"I am sure no one would have thought it," said Agnes, bitterly. "You seemed to find her almost as much in the way as I did."

"Perhaps that was your doing," he answered. "When I brought Doris home last August I had no thought but what she would be happy here; she was a fragile, sensitive creature, but I meant to cherish her into content. If a barrier crept up between us, if I was always being shown her faults and failings, Agnes, I must say to you as that poor girl did this afternoon—it is your work."

"I am going to bed," said Miss Gordon, tartly. "I don't intend to sit up any longer to be insulted after all the sacrifices I have made for you, Andrew; you ought to know better than to be ungrateful. As for your wife," and she gave a disdainful sniff, "you'll find out before long that your marriage was the greatest mistake of your life."

Left alone Andrew turned into his own den and lighted his pipe, tobacco being to the masculine troubles as much solace as a cup of tea is to the woes of the gentler sex.

As he sat by the smouldering fire puffing clouds of smoke into the air his thoughts were busy with but one subject—his wife.

They had been married just six months. He had proposed to her from pity because she seemed to him so lonely and desolate; but he loved her now—as he had told his sister—with every fibre of his heart; and yet the love had sprung up so gradually, so imperceptibly, that it had needed

the shock of to-day's revelation to teach him his own secret.

He loved her, and he did not believe she had wronged him in thought or deed; only she was young and unhappy. There was no one at home to bring brightness or pleasure into her life, and so when a glimpse of both was offered her by another hand she had not refused it.

He thought of the sweet wistful face, the dark truthful eyes, and knew that in his blind rage and sorrow that afternoon he had misjudged her.

Well, he was a proud man; but not too proud to confess his mistake. He would go to his wife and tell her of his love; he would beg her for his sake to let them begin their married life afresh, to care for no other man's escort but his, to trust him to try to make her happy.

Agnes must leave them. It would be hard to arrange, for his sister had given up a good situation to come and keep his house, and a part of the very unlovely furniture of Cedar Lodge was her property; but Andrew's eyes were opened at last. He knew the place could never really be homelike to Doris while her sister-in-law ruled everything.

No, Agnes must go, even if half the rooms were shut up, and they had to do with one servant, that by these economies he might make his sister a small allowance.

He went upstairs at last, taking off even his slippers lest the sound of his footsteps should awake his wife. If Doris slept he would not disturb her even to confess his mistake and implore her pardon.

She looked so lovely asleep, with her dark lashes falling on her pure creamy skin. How could he ever have been mad enough to distrust her even for a moment!

He pushed the door open and went in, shading his candle with his hands till he had placed it in a far corner; then as he approached the bed, every drop of blood in his veins seemed to turn cold, yet perspiration stood in great beads on his forehead so terrified was he at what he saw, for the big old-fashioned bed was tenantless, and on the pillow where Doris' brown head should have rested was a sealed letter, addressed to himself.

He broke the seal hurriedly, and then, his hands trembling with impatience, he unfolded the sheet of paper and read his wife's farewell words.

"When you asked me to be your wife, Andrew, you knew I did not love you, and I knew that pity had made you offer me your name; but I thought—Heaven help me—that at least you liked me as a friend, and that when we lived together you would grow to care for me.

"I told you the truth. I was sure there was no one in the whole world I wished to marry. It was the truth, and now I am leaving you for ever I repeat it. I have never wronged you in thought or deed, and I only go away because it is torture to be at your side knowing I am only a burden to you, and that your sister has turned your heart against me.

"I think if Agnes had not been here you might have grown to love me, and I, I could have worshipped you if only you had let me feel there was any place in your heart for a wife.

"I thought at first I would go away without a word, and let you think of me as you pleased. What did it matter, since you cared nothing for me? but for the sake of your goodness to me at Brighton, and of those first days of our married life, when I hoped we might be happy, I will tell you the truth.

"The gentleman I met at the Crystal Palace is Sir Lionel Maxwell. His aunt was very, very kind to me in the old time at Riverside, and he—you may as well know it—once asked me to be his wife.

"It was knowing this—knowing that as I had refused him when I was free he could not understand my friendship—that made me feel I could meet him sometimes without any thought of harm.

"It was very dull here with you out, and Agnes never speaking, except to show me what a burden she considered me. I could not see any harm in spending a few of the winter afternoons where all was bright and cheerful. You bring it up

against me that I kept my meetings with Sir Lionel secret; that I never asked him here. How could I bring him to Cedar Lodge when Agnes would have looked askance at any friend of mine? and I could not bear for him to see how unhappy I was at home.

"I shall never forget your kindness to me last August. All I can do for you is to go away and relieve you from the presence of your unloved wife. I cannot give you back your freedom; I know that while I live you cannot marry again, but there is no room in your life for a wife, so perhaps you won't mind that; and for the rest, I promise to be as lost to you as though I really had died and been buried.

"Think as kindly of me as you can for the sake of the old days in Scotland. I have never been really happy since. Oh! I wish it wasn't wrong to take one's own life, and then you should be free—really free from the poor little wife who is only a burden to you.

"DORIS."

That was all! There was not the least reference to her own future—not the slightest clue as to her plans, supposing, poor child, she had made any.

Dr. Gordon looked anxiously round. All her possessions seemed in their usual place. He opened the big old-fashioned wardrobe and then he missed a good-sized hand-bag which he had given her in those brief, happy days at Brighton. She had probably taken it, with a few necessaries, and her personal treasures, a likeness of Mr. Jory Ward and one or two memorials of the mother she had never known.

Andrew Gordon sat as one stunned.

His wife had left him.

The clock on the mantelpiece ticked on loudly, and listening to its monotonous tick, tick, it seemed to Andrew that these words joined themselves to it as a low, sad accompaniment,—

"Doris has gone away! Doris has gone away!"

He could do nothing before morning, that much was certain; and at last he threw himself on the bed, dressed as he was, and snatched two or three hours of dull, heavy, unrefreshing sleep.

He was downstairs long before his sister. He told the servants that Mrs. Gordon had unavoidably been called away, and had left home the evening before during his own absence. Then, feeling he must say something to stop the curious speculations in the kitchen, he added that he did not expect his wife to return for some days; that Miss Gordon would shortly be leaving Cedar Lodge, and in the interval between her departure and their mistress's return they must do their best to keep house without superintendence.

It was a masterly stroke; the opinion in the kitchen (and which from there spread far and wide) was that Agnes had so oppressed her poor little sister-in-law that the young wife had taken French leave and refused to return to her husband's home until she should be its sole mistress.

It was not a very flattering theory to the doctor, since it implied he could not rule his own household; but it was far and away better than that people should imagine he had driven his young wife into exile by his cruel, unfounded suspicions.

Another ordeal awaited Andrew, but it had to be gone through, and he faced it manfully.

He called Agnes into his den when he heard her come downstairs, and went to the point at once.

"Doris has left me."

"Well!" exclaimed his sister, "of all the wicked, ungrateful hussies—"

"Hush!" he said, gravely; "everything we heard yesterday is explained to my complete satisfaction. My wife has left me only because she refuses to share her home with one who continually misjudges her. I am sorry to have to speak plainly, Agnes, but I am convinced that Doris will never be happy while you are at Cedar Lodge; therefore I must ask you to leave it before her return."

"And if I refuse?"

"You can hardly do that. Every article of furniture you brought here you are at liberty to remove; and I will pay you seventy pounds

a-year (which was the salary you received from Mrs. Green), until you obtain another situation."

"You can't—you haven't got it."

"I will pay it if it entails my living on bread and water; but I shall manage it; the room where your furniture now is must of course be shut up, and so few apartments will then be in use that Doris and I can manage easily with one servant. Any way, I have made up my mind."

"And a cruel, ungrateful decision it is," she retorted. "I have sacrificed my whole life to you, this chit of a girl has brought you nothing but trouble and humiliation, yet she is preferred before me."

Andrew looked at her gravely; his words when they came were more sorrowful than angry.

"I do not blame you entirely. I ought to have protected my wife from your malice. I ought to have known that as you loved money above all else you would revenge my wife's poverty on her by every means in your power."

"I am not mercenary," cried Agnes, "only careful and prudent."

He shook his head.

"You know perfectly that your manner to Doris changed the moment you knew she was not an heiress."

"Well, it meant ruin for you to marry a penniless girl."

He sighed.

"I fancy, Agnes, that if I had done my duty to my wife my marriage would have meant not ruin but prosperity. A man happy in his home has so much more energy to fight the world and struggle for fortune in life's hard battle. A wife who loved me would have been my best spur in the contest."

"Oh, don't talk a lot of sentimental rubbish," cried Agnes, angrily; "just answer me this—do you insist on my going?"

"I do."

"And when?"

He hesitated. He would have liked to say "this afternoon," but he could not be hard on a woman.

"This is Thursday; I should think you could manage to leave by Saturday. I will write a cheque for the first month before you go."

"You need not trouble," said Agnes, bitterly. "When I want to be pensioned off like an old servant I'll tell you. Aunt Susan has always wanted me to live with her, only I sacrificed her offer for your sake."

"Aunt Susan! Why, she is almost a miser. You have said yourself over and over again that two nights were as much as you could stand in her house."

"She has ten thousand pounds to leave behind her," said Agnes, thoughtfully, "and the doctor told me the last time I was there she could hardly live many months."

"But you will be miserable there!"

"I shall feel that I am doing my duty," said Agnes, proudly; "and Aunt Susan has always preferred me to any of her other relations. I think it most probable that she will leave me her money, and then," this with a ring of bitterness, "I shall be quite independent of you and your flighty wife."

Dr. Gordon neglected his patients terribly that day; after seeing the most urgent cases he went up to London and called on a friend, who not having the health to complete his medical studies had taken up the trade (profession or calling) of a private detective.

Andrew and Jim Teasdale had been chums for years, and though a great distaste for Agnes had kept Jim away from Cedar Lodge his affection for its master remained unbroken.

To this trusty friend Andrew Gordon poured out his story; he would have been quite ready to quarrel with Jim on the spot had the latter suggested any evil motive for Doris leaving home; but happily for their mutual friendship Mr. Teasdale did nothing of the sort.

"You are a clever fellow, Andrew," he said, slowly, "but you made an awful mistake. Why, even a duffer like me could have told you it was an impossible scheme to bring your wife to a home of which your sister remained the mistress."

"I meant it for the best; I married very rid-

denly. Agnes had given up a great deal for my sake, and then Doris was so young and pretty, almost a child, I couldn't bear the idea of her having to pinch, and screw, and worry herself over making both ends meet."

"I begin to understand. You treated her like a wax doll, and wanted to keep her shut up in a glass case; being a true-hearted woman she objected."

"You will help me to find her, Jim! I'm not rich, but I wouldn't grudge every penny I have in the world to bring back my Doris."

"My dear old boy, there need be no talk of money between you and me. I'll find Mrs. Gordon, if it's possible, and then you may repay the actual out-of-pocket working expenses if you wish it; but I'm undertaking the case for love, not gain."

"God bless you!"

"But you must submit to my advice in all things, and I'm afraid it won't be very palatable. First of all you must go and see Sir Lionel Maxwell."

Gordon winced.

"Whatever for?"

"For two things. First, to prove that you have not the faintest suspicion your wife felt more than friendship for him; next, because, as he is evidently an habitué of Riverside, he may be able to tell you what friends Mrs. Gordon made in the year she lived there. You see, Andrew, you know absolutely nothing of that time; from the day she left Mr. Meredith's house at Hartleigh until you met her on the pier at Brighton her whole life is a sealed book to you except for the one fact that she suffered great unkindness from the second Mrs. Ward."

"She mentions in her letter," he could not bring himself to show Jim the letter, "that Sir Lionel's aunt was very kind to her."

"Just so. And you want that aunt's name and address. Believe me, Andrew,—though I can understand your hating the bare idea—there's but one thing to do, see Sir Lionel Maxwell at once."

And, against his own wishes, yielding to his friend's superior judgment, Andrew Gordon set out for Sir Lionel's chambers.

CHAPTER XIV.

GEORFREY FAIRFAX did not make a very long visit to his step-uncle, if by any stretch of courtesy Major Ward could claim that relationship. Riverside was a very uncongenial place to him. He took a violent dislike to its mistress, and when he found his presence only added to Marjory's perplexities he was glad to take the first opportunity of ending his stay.

But first he contrived to have a long talk with Marjory; indeed it did not need much contriving, for his hostess was only too ready to pair him off with her step-daughter. On this occasion they were nominally supposed to be going to pay a call on the Hiltons, but they took longer to walk to Maybank than would have seemed possible to two healthy young people, but that they dawdled on the way that they might have a long undisturbed talk.

It was wonderfully mild for the time of year, and Erlestoke lay in the most sheltered part of Sussex, so that there was no fear of Marjory taking cold; and when, as they walked through the wood—which formed a kind of short cut—they came to the trunk of a fallen tree, Geoffrey had no hesitation in asking her to sit down and rest.

"I am not in the least hurry to get to Maybank," he observed, frankly. "I detest formal calls, and I don't particularly like what I have heard of the Hiltons."

"Then why did you volunteer to come?" demanded Marjory, not unnaturally.

"Because I wanted to talk to you."

A long silence; Geoff broke it with something like a sigh; he began—

"I've been here just a week, Marjory, and I understand things far better than I did the day we consulted together at Brighton station. I hate Mrs. Ward."

Marjory nodded her head emphatically.

"I didn't say a word too much against her!"

"Not one word."

"And you see her sin," went on Marjory, as composedly as though she had been speaking of anyone else's future instead of her own; "she and papa want you to marry me—they think that if I were a rich man's wife I must be able to help them!"

Geoffrey showed far more embarrassment than Marjory.

"I expect you are right. Anyway, the Major asked me last night if I had thought any more about my step-father's will."

"Ah!" and she drew in her breath tightly; "and what did you tell him?"

"I said that I had been too busy. It wasn't quite the truth, but what else could I say? He remarked that such things were better settled promptly; and I couldn't expect you to spend the best years of your life waiting for me to make up my mind. Of course I told him I did not expect anything of the kind. Then he told me you were very much admired (which did not surprise me at all), and mentioned the names of two gentlemen anxious to become his son-in-law."

"He must have drawn largely on his imagination," and Marjory laughed with a frankness which was perfectly delightful; "for I cannot even guess who they are."

"Do you know," said Geoff, a little diffidently, "when we talked together in Yorkshire, I, too, fancied there was a particular favoured swain!"

Marjory shook her head.

"There was someone I fancied I liked," she said, simply; "but I have seen a great deal of him since August, and I know now that I didn't really care for him a scrap."

"Well, I see I must enlighten you as to the Major's would be sons-in-law—they are Sir Lionel Maxwell and Adrian Rositer."

At the sound of the second name Marjory gave a ringing laugh.

"Poor papa, if he really believes that he must be blind indeed. Mr. Rositer is head over ears in love with Judith Hilton. I am not quite sure that he knows it himself, and I am positive she does not; but the fact remains it was love at first sight, and if he seems to seek me out, it is only that he may talk about Judith."

"Shall we see his divinity to-day?"

"I expect so. She is the eldest daughter, the only one 'out'."

"And your special friend?"

"She is the only girl I ever really cared for, except Doris. Oh I don't think me fickle, Mr. Fairfax, or that Judith Hilton could take my darling's place; but I do like Judy very much; she is so frank and natural, and though she is much younger than I am she is (or affects to be) a woman of the world. She is as cynical as if she were a hundred."

"I hate cynics."

"Well, Judy has had a peck of trouble. Her father is horrible."

"In what way?"

"I had nearly said every way; but that would be unfair. Mr. Hilton has the manners and education of a gentleman, she wouldn't need to blush for him in society; but he is a domestic tyrant; he's horrid to his wife, and the poor children are frightened to death at him. Judith is the only creature who does not fear him, except an aunt who has just come to live with them, and whom I have never seen. Report goes that she is an odious old lady, but being very rich her nephew pays court to her for her wealth."

"The household at Maybank must present many points of interest."

"When I grumble about my troubles, Judy always declares I have none," said Marjory; "she seems to think that because I shall have enough to keep me and can leave home when I am twenty-five it doesn't matter how much I suffer in the interval. She forgets that for nearly four years I am at Mrs. Ward's mercy."

Fairfax looked very troubled. He would have fain thrown his arms round Marjory and told her he loved her with all his heart and soul, that he desired nothing better than to marry her

and secure Alfreton Towers for them both; but he knew perfectly such a course would have lost her to him for ever. He was forced to dissemble and hide his real wishes.

"Marjory, I must go away, I can't stay on at Riverside the guest of a woman I detest; but before I go tell me just this, is there nothing I can do for you? Have you no relations on your mother's side who could force the Major to let you leave Riverside and provide you with a separate home and income?"

She shook her head.

"I have no relations except the Merediths, and they are so far away it would take six weeks for a letter to reach them."

"I don't think you can stay on here," said Fairfax, gravely; "Mrs. Ward hates you; I can see it in her eyes when she looks at you, Marjory. Surely there must be some friends who would take care of you until you decide what man you will make happy."

She shook her head.

"I know of no one. Old Lady Maxwell is very kind, but she would think it heresy to encourage a daughter's rebellion. You see, Geoff, she used his name unconsciously, 'I have nothing tangible to complain of. To outsiders my father and Mrs. Ward seem all kindness and indulgence.'

He hesitated.

"Would you let me advance you some money, enough to keep you until you are twenty-five, and the Major is obliged to yield up your mother's fortune?"

She shook her head.

"I would rather take help from you than from anyone I know; but it would never do. Think of the sum it would cost to keep me for more than three years. I couldn't owe it to a stranger."

He knew that by the world's code she was right. A woman, if she is young and beautiful, may not accept money from a man whom nothing prevents from becoming her husband. It is one of Mrs. Grundy's sternest laws that a girl may only owe such a debt to a kinsman near enough for the law and the church to alike forbid his making her his wife.

"When I leave here I expect I shall move about a good deal," said Geoff, simply; "but the old housekeeper at Alfreton will always have my address. Will you promise me to send for me if there is ever anything I can do, if you need such help as a friend, a brother, could give?"

"You asked me that at Brighton."

"And I ask it again now, Marjory. I don't want to frighten you, and, indeed, my own fears are too vague and shadowy for me to put them into words. Only I am afraid, horribly afraid, that Mrs. Ward has some evil plan against your happiness."

"I think so too," half-breathed the girl. "At first after poor Doris went Mrs. Ward seemed much kinder; it was as though, having got her own way, she was satisfied; but now she is not content with getting rid of Doris, she wants to be free of me also."

The same thought was in Geoff's own heart; he could not contradict the girl, for he knew, he felt, she spoke the truth.

"Papa loves me," said Marjory, slowly; "but he is weak as wax in her hands."

"We must think of the future," said Fairfax, earnestly. "You won't take money from me; but at least you will send for me if you need a friend. Promise me that!"

"I promise," said Marjory, slowly, almost solemnly, "if there is time."

"What on earth do you mean?"

"I don't know."

"You must have something in your head; you did not choose those words without some meaning."

"Well, then, whatever Mrs. Ward does she will do quickly. Think of Doris!"

"What of her?"

"We left here—papa and I—on Monday night, and Doris was then as much a fixture as the children in the nursery. By Thursday morning she had been sent away in shame and disgrace, so

suddenly, so silently, that even a love like mine has been unable to trace her."

"Well!"

"It took Mrs. Ward only two days and nights to rid herself of Doria, she will be as quick with me when my time comes. It would take nearly as long as that for you to come from Yorkshire to my aid. If you were away, and my letter had to be forwarded, you would come too late."

"I see; it's horrible to think of you at that woman's mercy. Look here, Marjory, let me lend you just five pounds."

"You need not," she said, with a smile, "I am a very frugal body. Papa, for shame's sake, allows me a trifle out of the money which is really my own. I generally have five pounds or even more in reserve."

"Then if things here get too bad I will tell you what to do; go to London. An old aunt of mine has a quiet house in a remote part of Kensington. I will give you her address. If anything wrong happens go straight to her."

"But what in the world would she think of a stranger's claiming her hospitality?"

"I called her my aunt; but, really, she is a cousin of my step-father's. Miss Mowbray knew Sir James in his younger days; she was intimate with your mother before she made her choice, and sent away Sir James for your father's sake. I am positive that Aunt Grace, as I have always called her, would be kind to you just because in years gone by she knew and loved your mother."

A strange new brightness came to Marjory's eyes as she wrote Miss Mowbray's address, and gave it to her.

"I would rather have this, Geoff, than any amount of money you could lend me. Don't you see if I am forced to leave home anyone who knew mother would understand how hard it was for me to see another woman in her place?"

"I shall go and see Aunt Grace when I leave here," said Mr. Fairfax, gravely; "three hours in the train would take you to her, so that I shall feel that with her you would be safe until I can come to you."

"After all," said Marjory, with a strange sudden gaiety, "you and I may be making much ado about nothing, and worrying ourselves about dangers which don't exist. Papa and Mrs. Ward have done their utmost to make you marry me; but when they see you are no more inclined than I am to rush into matrimony they may have the sense to see their grand scheme has failed and give it up. After all," she went on, warmly, "it would not avail them much to persecute me since we could hardly be married without your consent."

And then they laughed and forgot the long grave consultation that had gone before, for after all they were both young and in good health, and sorrow was not natural to their age.

"And now," said Geoffrey, with mock gravity, "after this long digression may I be allowed to pay my respects at Maybank and make the acquaintance of Mrs. Hilton?"

"And Judith," put in Marjory; "you should not have left her out. I do hope," added the girl pathetically, "you won't fall in love with her, for I don't want to have Mr. Rosseter heart-broken on my hands. Being so to say his confidante I should feel a sense of treachery to him if Judith were won by anyone I had introduced to her."

"Rest easy," said Geoff, simply, "Mr. Rosseter's hopes are in no danger from me."

"You mean that you are invulnerable? Have a care, sir; Judith Hilton is a beauty."

"If she were the loveliest creature Heaven ever made I should still be safe," he asserted; "and now, Marjory, it will be nightfall before our call is made if we don't hurry on."

They walked more quickly for the last mile; but it was so late when they reached Maybank that Marjory told him they were quite "unfashionable," and threatened to tell Mrs. Hilton the delay was all his fault.

The servant ushered them into the drawing-room, where the pretty gipsy tea-table still stood in front of Mrs. Hilton. Judith was at the piano playing short snatches of popular songs, more for her amusement than anyone

else's, for her mother had been wrapped in a book, and no one else was present.

"How good of you to come, Marjory," the girl cried. "I had almost given you up."

"It's all his fault," said naughty Marjory, as she introduced her cousin, and then almost as a matter of course the quartette broke into two pairs, the girls sitting on a low sort of cosy couch by the fire, and Geoff taking a chair near Mrs. Hilton's tea-tray.

Poor woman! He pitied her. One glance told the astute young man that Maude Hilton looked both ill and unhappy. Judith might be beautiful and fascinating, but it was her pale, troubled-looking mother who attracted his admiration and sympathy.

"You are quite a stranger to Sussex I am told," she said to him, pleasantly. "Do you like this neighbourhood?"

"I am afraid I prefer my own north-country," he answered. "Do you like Maybank? My cousin says you are new comers."

"It is very pleasant, and I am glad my daughter should have found a friend in Miss Ward. Judith has led rather a lonely life, the other children are so much younger."

"And Marjory has lately lost an adopted sister, so she too is glad to find a friend."

So they talked on of little nothing, when the door opened suddenly and the master of the house entered. In spite of what Marjory had told him Fairfax was astonished at the change immediately apparent in Mrs. Hilton. She shivered as one smitten with a sudden chill. Then she drew herself bolt upright (she had been sitting in an easy attitude in a low chair) and tried to go on with the conversation, after a brief introduction of the gentlemen to each other.

Mr. Hilton seemed rather affable than otherwise. He sat down near Geoffrey and began to make conversation; but for the pale, strained look on his wife's face, and his daughter's marked indifference Fairfax might not have believed all he had heard of Lord Rosseter's agent.

"It's a beastly hole," was Mr. Hilton's verdict of his new sphere, "and I would far rather have stayed on in Herefordshire, but my wife was mad after a change, and so I came here."

Fairfax did not give him credit for as much unselfishness as he professed.

"I don't wonder at Mrs. Hilton preferring to be near London. Herefordshire is too remote to please a lady, though I grant it is one of the loveliest of our counties."

"Do you know it well?" asked Maude, and it seemed to him there was a shade of anxiety in her tone.

"Not really well. I have 'done' the Wye in a tourist sense, that is all, and I have passed through Herefordshire on my way to Wales. I have a cousin who lives just over the border."

"What part of Wales?" asked Mrs. Hilton, trying hard to speak as easily as she had done before her husband's entrance.

"Shirley. Her husband has been rector there for nearly thirty years."

The cap Mr. Hilton had just taken from his wife's hands fell to the ground with a loud crash, the hot tea being poured right over his feet. No doubt it was an unpleasant experience, but he need not have looked quite so angry or have stormed at Mrs. Hilton for having cups without sensible handles.

"They are the cups we have had for years," she answered, coldly. "I am sure Mr. Fairfax will excuse you if you like to retire to remedy the mischief."

And Mr. Hilton, probably finding his feet anything but comfortable, made his exit, to the unmitigated relief of the four he left behind.

(To be continued.)

A NOVELTY in modern scientific research is the means by which wind may be measured by the sound. The whistling of the wind as it crosses a wire varies with the velocity, and this can be computed from the pitch of the note observed in case of a given diameter of wire, and for a given air temperature.

HOW I FOUND MY WIFE.

—:—

LATE in the summer of '82, while seated in my room in the city, I received a very urgent letter. It was from an old chum, and the contents were as follows:—

"B.—, Aug. 25, '82.

"DEAR CHARLEY,—I'm in a fix, as you will see when I explain, and furthermore you are the man of all others to help me. The most attractive part of my menagerie is delayed, and the people are gradually falling off in their attendance, all on account of the illness of my lion-tamer, who was taken ill a few miles from here. Since then the cages of the lions have not been entered, as I have not been able to find a man that will enter them and 'show up the animals.' So you see, unless something is done, my show is in danger of going to destruction. Now, what I want to come at is this. I am, of course, aware of your old habits, and of your occupation in days of yore; and now, if you still have your old power over the animals, will you, to oblige your old chum and save his business perhaps from ruin, come to this place and take charge of matters for a few weeks, at least until my man recovers. Your expenses will of course be defrayed, and your pay be forthcoming. Telegraph your answer to this place immediately.—Your friend, as ever,

"DICK BENSON."

A few words of explanation are needed.

Dick and myself had been school and college chums, and our tastes had run in the same channel, viz., upon animals; and I, during the spare moments in my college course, had devoted myself to hard study upon their manners, habits, etc., especially those of the lion, and to the manner of taming this animal, so that within a year or so after leaving college I had become a skillful lion-tamer, and had engaged in the business, but was not following it at the time of which I write.

My friend, with the aid of a small capital, had engaged in the menagerie business, and in time had become a rich man, although he still carried on the business, as the letter shows.

The question now arose, should I go? This was not long in deciding, for besides my remembrance of "suld lang syne," and my natural desire to help my friend, I had become tired of the humdrum city life, and was longing for something exciting. I at once telegraphed my answer, and started by the next train.

Many times since have I thanked my stars for this decision, as it was the means of obtaining for me one of the best of wives, as the sequel will show.

A few days later I reached the place they were at, and in the course of half-an-hour thereafter was warmly shaking hands with my old chum, whom I had not seen for several years.

He soon made me acquainted with all parts of his exhibition. The lions, which I was to manage, were shown to me, and in a few days I had them under subjection, showing that I had not forgotten my former occupation. And so my friend's exhibition went on, and was again in a prosperous condition.

We were getting along finely together, and I had been with the exhibition three or four days, and we had left the place and taken up our line of march for S—, where we were intending to remain a week or so, as it was a town of considerable importance.

We were travelling till late, one summer evening, on the road to this place, and long before we reached it the animals began to get restless, the cause being that for a day and a half we had not been able to obtain their usual allowance of fresh meat. We learned that the drovers had been through that unrefined part of the country, buying up stock, and nothing remained except a few choice animals, with which the owners would not part for love or money, and I confess I had become a little alarmed in regard to my lions, and my alarm was increased when, on reaching S—, we found the same state of affairs there.

The tent was raised, however, on the following day, and preparations made for an exhibition.

In the afternoon we had a partial exhibition, and all this time the animals were growing more and more uneasy, and my efforts to quiet them not being very successful, I already began to have some doubts as to the propriety of entering the cages.

A few spectators came in during the afternoon and were engaged in viewing the animals.

The show was almost over, and a few persons only remained within the tent, and I and a few of the employés of the show were standing on one side, conversing on the danger of entering the cages, which I would be required to do in the evening, when suddenly our attention was attracted by a shriek loud and prolonged, coming from the other side, near the cages of the lions.

Turning quickly, I saw a sight which filled me with horror.

One of the largest male lions was just in the act of drawing a little boy into the cage through the ventilator at the bottom.

I took in the whole tableau at once—the crowd, as many as remained, rushing towards the cage, the manager endeavouring to restrain the child's almost frantic sister, who was trying to reach the door of the cage; and, lastly, the ferocious beast inside, who, probably, thinking his prey secure, stood with his paw upon the breast of the child, quietly surveying the crowd and awaiting further developments.

Forgetting the danger which we had been so earnestly debating, and seizing my loaded whip, in a second I had reached the cage, and stood within, with the door carefully closed behind me.

At the moment I entered, the lion looking towards me, I fastened my gaze upon him, and kept it so for perhaps four minutes, but, as I was not sure of my power over the beast in his present condition, they were moments of terrible anxiety to me, and I was for the time being charmed, as it were, by his powerful gaze, so that it seemed hours before I recovered my presence of mind enough to advance, which I finally did, at the same time striking him a sharp blow with the whip across the neck, and ordering him up.

Seeing evidently that I did not fear him, he obeyed sullenly enough. Following him up with another blow, I ordered him into the corner, where he betook himself with an angry growl.

Then taking up the boy, and at the same time keeping my eye fastened on the lion, without stopping for my usual obeisance to the audience, I backed out of the cage.

But by the time I reached the door my strength gave way, and I had scarcely power to fasten the door after leaving the cage. I soon recovered, however, and, amid the cheers of the crowd, restored the boy to his now rejoicing sister and father, who had by this time reached the spot, and who, with tears in his eyes, begged me to call at his house on the morrow that he might express his thanks, which he was then incapable of doing on account of his emotions.

It appeared that the boy, with a child's natural curiosity, had been trying to get acquainted with the huge lion by poking him through the ventilator, which he could just reach, and which had been through some mistake left open, and had been observed by his sister when it was just too late.

It was her frantic scream that had given me the first alarm.

After some conversation with my new acquaintances I left the tent with my friend Benson, the manager, who, clapping me on the back as we passed out, said,—

"My boy, you made a good thing of it. I saw you casting sheep's eyes at that golden-haired sister. Something will come of it, my lad, mark me."

"Nonsense!" said I, laughing, and we parted until evening.

But that was the last time I entered the cages. The original tamer had recovered, and joined the exhibition at this place, but, as I afterwards learned, he did not enter the cages until having

passed through several places, they obtained meat for the animals.

On the next day, as agreed upon, I called upon my friends to ascertain the condition of the child, whose injuries were nothing more than some severe scratches on the arm.

Although my connection with the exhibition ended here, I still found it convenient to remain in S—— a few weeks, during which I called at the house of my friends several times, and upon each visit I became better acquainted with the blue-eyed sister, and at last I began to see, as my friend said, that "something might come" of my adventure.

Well, not to prolong my story, I soon left S—— for my home, and the blue-eyed damsel accompanied me as my wife, and as story-books say, "we lived happily for ever after."

VIVIEN'S AWAKENING.

CHAPTER XXI.

VIVIEN struggled in vain to free herself from the folds of the cloak that enveloped her. Useless—useless—the clasp of the strong arms tightened around her, and with an agonizing fear too great to be portrayed by words Vivien cried out to herself that Heaven had indeed forsaken her.

A sweet, subtle fragrance seemed to rise up from the folds of the cloak and enfold her, benumbing her senses, and locking them in a terrible embrace. She ceased to struggle—it seemed almost impossible to move either hand or foot.

"The narcotic has done its work well," muttered Walker, triumphantly, as he hurried rapidly toward the coach. "Open the door, please. What is the matter?" he cried impatiently, as the driver fumbled awkwardly at the door of the vehicle. "Open the door quickly!"

"Something seems to be the matter with the knob; it's hard to open," returned the man. "If I had a wrench I could fix it in about two minutes, but as I can't get one maybe you'll lend a hand, sir."

For a moment James Walker hesitated; the slender figure in his arms had ceased to struggle, and he laid it down in the green grass and turned to the coachman's assistance.

A cool, gentle breeze lifted the folds of the cloak and swept across Vivien's white face; the rain dashed upon it and revived her. With wonderful energy she fought hard against the dull, dazed feeling that was fast steeping her senses in its dread embrace.

With the quick warning intuition that sometimes comes to us in moments of great peril Vivien realized that if she would escape from the terrible danger that was closing in around her she must make the effort without a moment's delay. Her brain seemed whirling and her breath leaving her.

With a quick spasmodic movement she freed herself from the folds of the heavy cloak, and noiselessly gained her feet. Her terrible fear seemed to lend wings to her feet. And like a hunted animal whom the cruel sportsman ruthlessly pursues Vivien dashed from her captors, fairly flying over the long damp grass and beds of clover, trusting to the impenetrable darkness to screen her.

She heard the startled exclamation of surprise and deep imprecations that burst from the two men, and she felt that there would be little mercy shown her if they tracked her down.

"Mother," she gasped, holding up her little white hands toward the dark, starless sky, "save me—save me! Mother, hear the prayer of your heart-broken child! My enemies are closing in around me!"

Vivien knew every inch of the farm by heart, and in this moment when danger menaced her so darkly, she flew to the secure haven that had always sheltered her in her childhood—the hollow in the cherry tree.

She saw the glimmer of the lanterns the men carried as they searched the grounds for her, and with a beating heart she heard the threats of revenge that would be taken upon her when they should find her.

They stood directly beneath the cherry tree—so near that Vivien in her fright told herself that they must surely hear the wild throbbing of her heart—so near that she could have put out her trembling hands and touched them. That was the most intensely thrilling moment of Vivien North's life.

"I shall take good care that she does not escape me again," said Walker, bitterly; "it was most assuredly my own fault."

She heard them debate as to which was the better course to pursue—whether they should remain where they were until morning, or move on, and when daylight came commence the search with renewed vigour.

They decided at last to move on, and Vivien told herself that Heaven had heard her prayer.

An hour later Farmer Nelson sat in his armchair by the dying embers in the grate with his head buried in his hand, bitterly blaming himself for allowing poor little Vivien to be turned away from his door.

It had all been so sudden, so unexpected, the whole scene was over and Vivien gone before the old farmer had quite understood the exact state of affairs.

He had quickly followed down to the station with the hope of overtaking her, but no Vivien could be found—all search for her had proved fruitless. And the farmer sat helplessly gazing into the glowing coals, asking himself what he should do next.

A low sobbing cry from the half-opened window startled him, and turning toward the casement he saw Vivien standing there, piteously calling his name.

In an instant the farmer was on his feet and striding toward the door, which he hastily flung open.

"Come in, Vivien," he said, in a voice husky with emotion. "I will be responsible to your aunt. Thank Heaven you are here again, Vivien! When it comes to that we shall see who is master here!"

But she shrunk back from his outstretched hand with a low cry.

"I shall never enter your door, Uncle Tom," she whispered. "Come out here for just one little minute. If I do not have someone to speak to my heart will break."

The old farmer had always humoured Vivien in his bluff way, and he had been the only one in all the wide, wide world who had spoken kindly to his sister's orphan child, and to please her he went out to her now, thinking it best to humour her whim and coax her into the house.

But all entreaties proved unavailing; no inducement would prevail upon Vivien to enter the house from which she had been so rudely and cruelly repelled.

"I want you to hide me somewhere, Uncle Tom," she sobbed; "somewhere where I can die and end it all. I have no place to go; no one loves me but you, Uncle Tom."

"What has come over pretty, wilful, defiant, rogue Vivien," thought Tom Nelson, in sheer astonishment. "Was the crouching, timid, fearful little creature who begged him to hide her the romping, mischievous sprite who had been the sunshine of the house and the envy of his jealous wife and daughter?" And again he asked himself: "What has happened in one short week to change little Vivien?"

"Tell me where I can go," Uncle Tom, she pleaded; "where no one who has ever known me can look upon my face again."

A brilliant idea flitted suddenly through the farmer's brain.

"Perhaps, after all, change of air and new scenes are just what are needed for Vivien, until Julia's wrath has had time to cool," he thought; and he wondered that the idea had not occurred to him before.

The thoughtful look on his face gave her new hope.

"If you are in earnest, and really wish to go

away among strangers for a time, I think I can manage it," he said, slowly.

The grateful look in the blue eyes was too eloquent for words.

"There is a wealthy family in — whom I befriended once, and I think they would receive you as their guest for the summer if I were to request it. Do you think you would like that? You're not used to the ways of city life, child."

"It does not matter much where I go—one place will be the same as another to me," answered the girl, drearily.

How little the old farmer thought, as he entered the house and penned that fatal letter, that that one incident was the turning point of Vivien's eventful life!

He wrote it with a smile on his honest face, little dreaming of the terrible consequences that would accrue from it.

Farmer Nelson took her down to the station, and purchased her ticket. A train was just starting, and with hasty good-bye little Vivien drifted out of his life for ever, and on to her fate.

The terrible words of her would-be captor rang in her ears like warning, angry, hissing voices:

"If the world knew of what you had done, your name would be struck from the roll of honourable women for ever!"

"No one must ever know of it," she thought, with a frightened gasp. "I must bury that dark, terrible secret with me. I am going where no one will ever know me—no one will ever find me out. I will guard it more carefully than a miser guards his gold. I am young yet, and perhaps I may make something out of my life, after all."

The more she looked at the matter after the first wave of grief had passed over her heart, the more she began to abhor the dark-eyed, treacherous villain who had lured her on in the path of roses that led to a precipice.

She did not cry out for Heaven to wreak its vengeance on him, as many another would have done. All her life seemed to merge into the one feverish hope of burying the terrible secret that would strike off her fair name from the roll of honourable women for ever.

It became the one great object of her life to guard that dark, cruel secret from the world; and if it had not been for the reaction which these thoughts brought her, her heart would have broken with the crushing weight of sorrow that had blighted her young life. Yet she was as innocent of all wrong as a spotless angel; and all unconsciously fate was weaving a terrible vengeance, which Vivien's hand was to mete out to him who had wrecked her life.

CHAPTER XXII.

Vivien tucked the letter carefully away in the pocket of her dress, and sunk back timidly among the crimson cushions.

More than one of the passengers looked curiously at the childish white face turned so persistently toward the window, with a yearning, wistful stare in the blue eyes that were gazing straight out into the impenetrable darkness, yet seeing nothing.

At the junction Vivien was to have changed trains for —, but a strange fate interfered. As she stepped from the carriage the train gave a sudden unexpected start forward, and in a twinkling Vivien was precipitated beneath the wheels, which in an instant more would have crushed her, had not a bystander snatched her from her perilous position.

One glance at the white face, and he reeled back as though a blow had been suddenly dealt him.

"Good heavens!" he ejaculated huskily, drawing his slouched hat down over his handsome face. "It is the same young girl who came between Eleanor and me. She has crossed my path again!"

And without drawing the attention of the passers-by he quietly placed her in his carriage, which stood in waiting. With firm compressed lips he grasped the reins, and was soon whirling away through the darkness of the stormy night.

When they reached the water's edge Captain Marney—for it was he—lifted the insensible form of Vivien in his arms, and bore her on board of a dark, rakish craft that had dropped anchor in the dusky shadows of the tall buildings on the shore.

An hour later, when Vivien opened her eyes, she was horrified to find herself in the cabin of a strange-looking, piratical craft.

She sprang to her feet with a low cry. How came she there? Was it a dream? The last thing she remembered was leaving the train, and the accident that had occurred, the pain of which had caused her to faint.

She heard the sound of loud boisterous voices and bursts of song that made the blood nearly freeze in her veins.

The door was fastened, and with baited breath Vivien crept cautiously to the window and peered out.

The storm had ceased long since, and a bright full moon peeping out from ominous black clouds rendered every object on deck plainly discernible.

Some twenty or thirty men, dark-browed fellows all of them, dressed in sailor garb, were grouped about here and there, some sitting upon coils of rope, others walking about or leaning over the side, and gazing down into the white-tipped waves.

The sight made Vivien shudder and grow sick with horror; and as she gazed, a fair-faced youth suddenly made his appearance among the men. The moonlight fell full upon his handsome Saxon face and fair curling hair, golden as Vivien's own, upon his laughing blue eyes, and smiling mouth, as delicately curved as a girl's, and Vivien saw at once that he was a decided favourite among the rough sailors, for with one accord they raised their caps, and shouted lustily:

"Hurrah for our daring first mate, handsome Prince Edward."

"Thank you, my boy," he answered, cheerily; "but drop the prince. I'm proud enough to be called first mate of the daring pirate which is more to be feared than the blackest shark that rides the waves."

Another tall form came upon the deck at that moment, and as he turned his face toward the cabin window Vivien recognized him at a glance—Captain Marney, the pirate chief!

She clung to the window-sill, faint with terror, and a low piteous moan broke from her lips, which brought Lumley Lister at once to her side; but as he advanced toward her all her angry pride broke forth in bitter defiance.

"We meet again, fair lady," he said, bowing low with mock courtesy; "but this time I ought to be entitled to your respect, at least, for I have saved your life."

"I would rather have died there and then, than find myself again in your power!" Vivien burst out passionately. "Why did you save my life—you, whose hands are stained with crime?"

Lumley Lister flushed slightly, and there was a peculiar gleam in his dark eyes as he answered, composedly:

"I will gladly explain why I have brought you here if you will kindly be seated."

He waved his hand toward a camp-stool near by, and sunk down gracefully into an opposite one.

Vivien drew herself up to her full height, scornfully declining the proffered seat.

"I discovered your identity from the card you carried in your hand-bag; and it is not often that the *Night Queen*, as I call my staunch craft, is graced with the presence of as beautiful a young girl as lovely Vivien North; but I am willing to forego the pleasure of your society when we reach the next landing-place upon one condition," said the pirate captain, slowly and emphatically.

"Name the condition!" cried Vivien, tremblingly; "if it is to keep your secret of the underground cavern, I promise now never to breathe one word about it; only let me leave this place. To be among robbers of the land is bad enough, but to be among lawless pirates of the sea is horrible! If that is the condition, I promise beforehand."

"You anticipate, my dear young lady," replied the captain, coolly. "It is quite a different promise I desire to exact from you."

For a moment a dead silence fell between them, broken only by the wash of the water as the turbulent waves laved the sides of the *Night Queen*.

The chandelier threw a strange red glare through its rose-coloured globes over the white, wondering face of the young girl, the gloomy brow of the handsome young chief, and the dark furniture of the cabin, which made the moon's rays look pale and weird as they struggled through the windows upon Vivien's golden head.

"Name your condition!" cried Vivien. "It would kill me to breathe the same air with these people."

The young captain laughed.

"I have you to thank for separating me from the girl I love, and now, if you will repair the damage you have done in that direction, I will give you my word of honour as a gentleman that you will be free for evermore from all molestation from myself or my followers."

He saw Vivien's proud lips curl scornfully as he uttered the words.

"I will give you my word of honour as a gentleman," and his dark brows met in a frown; but he went on, haughtily,

"You must go to the same young girl to whom you have recited such a sympathetic tale of your wrongs at my hands. I will conduct you myself to pretty Eleanor's presence, and you must take a solemn vow before her that you have made a mistake—that I am not the person whom you knew as Captain Marney. You must declare to her it was a case of mistaken identity, and I came upon you so suddenly, and the likeness was for the moment so striking, you did not have the power to say so at the time."

"Have you finished?" asked Vivien, with strange calmness.

"I believe I have said all that will bear upon the point," he replied, eyeing her critically from beneath his dark, curling lashes, which his drooping eyelids half concealed as he leaned indolently back in the cushioned arm-chair.

"Then know this," cried Vivien North, haughtily, her voice ringing out sweet and clear above the dashing waves, "I would not stain my lips with a falsehood to deceive that pure, beautiful young girl whom I met, and who befriended me so generously for fifty like you! I spurn your offer! I refuse liberty bought at such a price!"

Lumley Lister leaped to his feet with a face equally as white as her own, his dark eyes glowing like smouldering fire, and a fierce imprecation broke from his lips, which he instantly checked, begging pardon for his momentary forgetfulness; but there was a look of stern resolution on his face that made Vivien tremble in spite of her attempt at bravery.

"Girl!" he said, sternly, standing before her and crossing his arms over his broad chest, "you seem determined to provoke me to the utmost. You know the nature of this craft. It is a piratical boat, under command of a pirate chief, and it is bound for a foreign coast and may never return to these shores. If my Eleanor could be made to believe that I was not the notorious captain at whose door so many charges are laid, she would link her fortunes with mine, and become my wife."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Vivien, fervently; but the captain went on calmly:

"My love for her would change the whole current of my life. I would fly with her somewhere out West, and commence life anew, and in time make something out of my life. A man will do much in this world for love's sake. You must always remember that, Miss North. Now answer me; will you help me in this affair?"

"Never!" cried Vivien, scornfully. "I would rather warn that beautiful girl against you. There is nothing so terrible under the blue sky as the attachment of a man who is dead to honour. She had better a thousand times give the pure love of her young heart to one whose life is free from all taint of sin and crime. No, no. I would far rather throw myself into the angry sea than do what you ask, Captain Marney. It is infamous!"

His dark face grew livid with intense passion. "You seem determined to provoke a fate worse than death upon yourself," he cried, hoarsely, advancing a step nearer. "Once more I ask you courteously, will you promise what I desire, and gain your freedom?"

Vivien raised her golden head, erecting it proudly, as she raised her blue eyes unflinchingly to his pale, anger-distorted face.

"And once more," she replied, firmly, "I tell you that I will not lend myself to such an infamous scheme. No power on earth can alter my resolution!"

"Then I shall claim you in Eleanor's place!" he cried, with a sardonic laugh. "You shall be my bride, sweet Vivien North. A pirate's unwilling bride. Ha! ha! ha! It will be a glorious revenge for your obstinacy. No power on earth can save you from me, lovely girl!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

WITH a single bound Lumley Lister had reached Vivien's side, his dark eyes blazing wrathfully, even while a mocking smile played about his moustached lips, as he repeated with greater emphasis than before,—

"You shall be my bride, sweet Vivien North. A pirate's unwilling bride! It will be a glorious revenge for your obstinacy. You have brought this upon your own head!"

"Stand back!" cried Vivien, panting, as she grasped a pearl-handled paper-cutter from the table, its keen steel edge glittering in the light. "Advance one step nearer at your peril! Robber captain though you are, I will show you how a young girl can defend herself. I do not fear your threats! I defy you!"

The mocking smile never left Lumley Lister's lips. With a dexterous movement he snatched the pretty pearl weapon from her little trembling hand, and in another moment he would have clasped the beautiful, panting girl in his arms, had not a strong white hand held him resolutely back, and Edward—the handsome golden-haired youth whom Vivien had noticed on deck, and whom the sailors had called "Prince Edward"—stepped quickly between them.

"What do you mean by this unwarrantable interference!" foamed Captain Marney, furiously. "How dare you take the liberty of entering this cabin at such a moment? What right have you to oppose my actions? If you were not a mere stripling of eighteen I would resent this by knocking you down at once."

"I claim the right of a gentleman to protest a young, beautiful and helpless girl from insult, Captain Marney," replied Edward, taking no notice of the closing remark. "I couldn't stand by and see a young lady treated in this shameful manner, were you twenty times the captain of this craft!"

The very boldness of the youth's daring rendered the captain fairly speechless with amazement; but in a moment he recovered himself.

"Attend to your own affairs!" he answered, with flashing eyes. "On the morrow my pretty captive is to become Mrs. Marney. I offered her freedom in preference, and she refused it."

"Do not believe him!" cried Vivien, in an agony of entreaty. "He offered me my freedom if I would stain my lips with a cruel falsehood in order to deceive a lovely young girl who once befriended me, and I refused; and he has threatened to make me marry him for revenge. I would kill myself first with my own hands!"

For a moment Edward Moxon was silent. He was young, but young brains are often the most fertile, and he was revolving a daring scheme in his mind.

Suddenly he turned to Captain Marney with the sunny smile peculiar to him.

"Give the young lady until to-morrow to think over your proposition, captain," he said, quickly. "She may be willing then to purchase her freedom by uttering a few words. It is not much of a price to pay. Leave her to herself until then, captain, and I promise you I shall not interfere again."

"Oh! don't desert me!" cried Vivien, in terror. "Do not leave me at the mercy of this man! Are you, too, lost to honour, that you could so calmly advise me to wilfully tell a falsehood that might wreck a life?"

She did not catch the warning glance Edward dashed at her from his blue eyes.

And this turn of affairs completely disarmed the suspicious captain.

"I really have no wish to be unkind to Miss North," he replied, with a courteous bow that was utterly lost upon Vivien. "I am as immovable as a rock in my decisions, yet I will grant her until to-morrow morning to think this matter over."

"If you gave me for ever to think over it my answer would still be the same!" cried Vivien, defiantly.

"Hush!" whispered Edward, hurriedly, under pretence of stooping down to recover her handkerchief. "You are not wise. Trust all to me. You shall escape!"

The words had been uttered with lightning-like rapidity, yet she had caught their import; and the world of hope, gratitude, and joy that flashed into her blue eyes was more eloquent than any reply from the lips could have been.

"You will not attempt to escape, I feel sure," said Captain Marney, standing on the threshold of the cabin. "It would not be safe for you to venture out upon deck. On the table you will find a silver bell. Please to ring if you wish for anything. I shall await your pleasure any time after sunrise to-morrow morning. Until then, au revoir, Miss North. I leave you to your own reflections and pleasant dreams."

He kissed the tips of his fingers to Vivien, and with another bow withdrew, securing the door firmly after him.

Left to herself all Vivien's bravery vanished instantly.

"Oh, Bertram Valentine," she moaned, "you are to be blamed for all this! Oh, my love, more false and cruel than the grave, why did you lead my feet on in the rosy path of love that has led to such a precipice! May Heaven in its mercy look kindly upon all young girls disappointed in love's golden dream," sobbed Vivien. "Every loving heart has its own true mate somewhere in the great, bleak, cruel world, yet there seems no mate for mine. Heaven of love ordained it so."

She had trusted too blindly to love's seductive wooing, and that passionate tenderness thrilled her young heart as the dark, handsome face of Bertram Valentine rose up before her.

She saw it all now when it was too late. If she had only made a confidant of her honest old Uncle Tom, he would have warned her against those secret meetings which have always turned out so disastrous since the world began. She had flown into the face of fate, and now she was paying the full price of her folly.

At that very moment, while Vivien North was sobbing so bitterly over the loss of her cruel lover, Bertram Valentine, who had recovered from his illness, and was bitterly repentant for his desertion of beautiful little Vivien, had started back to the old farm-house in search of her, mentally vowed to make full reparation to Vivien, let the cost be what it might.

He had discovered, too, that his father's story of the pretended mortgage was only a clever plan devised by him to hasten his son's marriage with Gertrude Frost. And this knowledge only added to Bertram's wrath, and he took advantage of his recent illness to indefinitely postpone his marriage with Gertrude.

His heart had turned to Vivien North—sweet, innocent little Vivien—with all the love he was capable of, and if she was once his wife he could bid defiance to his father's schemes concerning Gertrude.

Meanwhile out upon the dark ocean the storm had gathered again, and beat with redoubled fury against the cabin windows.

No sleep had visited Vivien North's eyelids. The words of Edward Moxon still rang in her ears—"Trust all to me; you shall escape." Had Heaven sent her one friend among the pitiless foes who surrounded her?

Heaven grant that it might be so. Vivien

dared not think of the morrow. No young girl under the blue sky was ever placed in such a thrilling situation.

"How can he save me?" was the question Vivien asked herself over and over again, as the gold inlaid clock on the bracket chimed away the swift, fleeting hours. It is always the darkest just before dawn, and that hour had fallen over the dark waters of the ocean, when a low cautious tap sounded upon the window-pane and a voice whispered, cautiously,—

"Miss North, are you there?"

In a moment Vivien had sprung to the window and drawn aside the heavy silken curtain, revealing, as she had expected, the face and form of Edward Moxon. Vivien opened the window noiselessly, and with a warning gesture of silence he stepped into the cabin.

"Miss North," he said, hurriedly, "if you dare trust yourself to my care I am here to save you. I have a boat lowered into the water. If you would escape this dreaded marriage with the pirate chief you must come with me."

"But you, sir! Think of the dreadful vengeance these pirates would take upon you if they knew you assisted me to escape."

"I have thought of all that," replied Edward Moxon, slowly and calmly, "and for your sweet sake I am willing to risk it, for I love you, lovely Vivien North. I would risk a thousand lives, if I had them, to save you. I ask not one kind word or look in return; but after I have placed you in safety, to know, in the beautiful language of Charles Dickens' ill-fated 'Steerforth,' that 'you will always think of me kindly and at my best,' is all I will ask—all the reward I want."

Tears sprung to Vivien North's lovely blue eyes.

"I trust you implicitly," she murmured.

He drew her little hand hurriedly within his arm, and helped her cautiously out upon the deck.

Dark storm-clouds obscured the moon, shading the sea in impenetrable darkness. Thunder rolled in the heavens and vivid lightning flashed as if the very flood-gates of heaven were flung wide open upon this terrible yet memorable night.

Quivering with fear at the wild raging of the tempest, yet daring and brave of heart, Vivien clasped Edward's outstretched hand and allowed him to lead her along through the frightful storm and the impenetrable darkness toward the boat which he had lowered into the dark, foaming-crested water.

They exercised the utmost caution as they made their way silently through the groups of sleepy sailors upon deck, lest a footfall or the slightest noise might betray their near presence, which meant recapture, and a fate worse than death.

The rain poured down in torrents, and the mad waves leaped high, and the little boat, tossed hither and thither by the leaping sportive water, seemed like an egg-shell on the heaving breast of the angry ocean. Yet Vivien did not hesitate to face death rather than the daring pirate chief upon the morrow, and drawing on her water-proof, which Edward had thoughtfully provided, she allowed herself to be lowered into the boat, with a prayer on her lips for safety.

But cruel, relentless Fate had not destined that Vivien should make her escape so easily. A blinding blaze of lightning lighted up the darkened heavens with a white glare bright as noon-day, revealing to Captain Marney, who stood leaning over the railing upon deck, the white upturned faces of the fugitives.

With terrible cry of rage he sprung quickly forward, shouting lustily,—

"Man the boats lively, my men, and follow that boat! A hundred pounds cash to the man who captures them! The girl must be taken dead or alive!"

He pointed his revolver quickly as he spoke and fired. There was a low moaning cry, and in the flash lightning he saw one of the figures throw up its hands and fall heavily to the bottom of the boat.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A low cry burst from Edward's lips.

"They have discovered us!" he cried, glancing back at the dark forms rushing frantically to and fro about the deck, as he hurriedly cut the rope that fastened the skiff. "We must trust to the darkness to screen us."

Vivien sat in the stern of the boat, her hands pressed tightly over her panting heart, terror and dismay upon every feature.

Edward had grasped the oars, but at the first stroke he threw up his hands with a low cry, and fell heavily forward into the bottom of the boat.

"I—I am struck!" he gasped. "Never mind me: save yourself if you can."

Vivien had sprung forward to his assistance, but a strong arm hurried her back, and the next instant Captain Marney himself had clambered into the skiff from his own boat, which had silently come up alongside.

"I am more than sorry to spoil such a pretty romantic elopement," he said, sneeringly; "but I really cannot permit such an unceremonious leave-taking. I shall be obliged to conduct you back on board of my craft, Miss North. And as for you, Edward, you shall have your reward all in due time."

In another moment Vivien and Edward found themselves back on board the *Night Queen*.

Vivien was placed in the cabin, while Edward was conveyed to another part of the boat to meditate over his rash folly.

"I do not imagine that you will make an attempt of this kind again," said Lumley Lister, grimly; "it would only result in a similar failure: you will be too wise to entertain such an idea. I can only believe that foolish, hot-headed boy persuaded you to take such a step. I warn you not to attempt it again."

And with these words he bowed himself out of Vivien's presence.

She was alone once more—alone with her pitiful sorrow, and a fate looming up on the morrow before her that would have made the stoutest heart faint with apprehension.

"Ah, me—ah, me! what sorrow your love has brought to me, Bertram Valentine!" she sobbed. "The warning in the little dream-book has proven to be but too true."

And lying there with her face buried deep in the roses of the carpet the words she had read and laughed over came sharply back to her.

"If a maiden dreams of a handsome stranger who smiles upon her, and calls her by name, then instantly disappears, the dream is of evil omen to the dreamer, for if she be young and beautiful her beauty will be her curse, bringing shame and disgrace are the month wanes. Let the dreamer beware!"

Heaven help her! whether by chance or fate the prediction had been strangely fulfilled; never had a few short days brought such a series of thrilling events to a young girl before.

Could she, the plaything of a fickle love-dream, be the same jolly little maiden who had sung so happily of love and "the handsome lover who would come to claim her some day," as she sat among the fragrant blossoms of the peach-tree in the golden sunshine? She had been the victim of the cruellest plot that could ever have woven its fatal web around a pure young girl's life—the victim of a mock marriage.

How could Heaven let a man live, and smile, and breathe the sweet warm sunshine who had been guilty of such a foul wrong against trusting innocence?

It would have been better if Bertram Valentine had taken her life, and in taking it spared her fair name and her honour. There was one week in her life that she must bury from all mortal eyes—the week she had spent at the cottage vainly waiting for Bertram.

Vivien North was as pure and spotless from all guilt or taint of wrong-doing as a little child; but when a part of one's life is shrouded in mystery the heartless world points with suspicion's finger, and the tongue of gossip wags freely.

All knowledge of the week at the cottage must be for ever hidden from the world; no one ever knew of it.

The chiming of the clock on the bracket re-

called Vivien's senses to her present perilous surroundings.

Would Lumley Lister carry out his threat of forcing her to become his bride on the morrow, if she still persisted in refusing to aid him in the plan he had so daringly proposed? Was there no chance of escape from a fate that would be worse than death?

As if in answer to the agonising thought she heard a dull scraping sound against the wooden boards of the partition, and the next moment the keen edge of a thin, narrow saw flashed into sight.

For a moment Vivien North scarcely breathed, through terrible fear, but stood white and cold as a marble statue, watching the saw with fascinated gaze, when suddenly a voice, which she recognised as Edward's, whispered, cautiously:

"Do not make an outcry. I am a friend—not an enemy."

Under his skilful hands a large aperture was soon effected in the partition.

"You must make your way into this room, Vivien," he whispered, "for I cannot come to you. I have something very important to say to you."

Silently Vivien obeyed, when, to her horror, she found that poor Edward was bound to his couch—which rested against the partition—with heavy ropes.

His right arm was free—it was lying across his breast—and Vivien saw that it was bandaged, and that there were crimson stains upon the white sleeve. Yet, with his wounded arm, poor Edward had made one last daring attempt to rescue Vivien from the pirate chief by cutting through the boards with a saw which he had happily found lying near at hand.

"Oh, you are wounded!" sobbed Vivien, kneeling down beside the couch; "and I am the cause of it all, for if I had not been for trying to help me escape this would never have happened—oh, never, never!"

"It is better to die for a good cause than to live for an evil one," answered Edward, with difficulty. The pain each moment was growing more intense, for he had received a fatal wound, and his moments, poor fellow, were numbered. "Do not grieve for me, Miss Vivien," he whispered, flushing to the very roots of his fair golden hair, as the breeze from an adjacent window tossed it to and fro on his feverish temple; "I am not worthy of it. But it is sweet to know that I shall die for your sake."

"Oh, do not say that!" cried Vivien, in the utmost distress. "You are not going to die. Heaven would not so reward you for an act of mercy. I will stay faithfully by your couch and nurse you until you are well and strong again."

Edward Moxon shook his head with a mournful smile.

"It will be all over with me within the hour," he sighed, "but I could never rest beneath the waves in peace unless you were free. I have thought of a daring plan; it is your last chance, Miss Vivien, of escape. Put your little white, cool hands on my burning brow, and I will tell you how; for wild, reckless, and impulsive as I am, I love you, Vivien North, and the memory of your gentle touch will make life sweeter while it lasts, and death easier to bear."

A startled cry broke from Vivien's lips; but he only held her white hands the closer. Vivien saw how pale his face had grown, and she noted the agony in his sinking voice.

He was only a rash boy of eighteen, and had faced death for her sake. How could she find it in her heart to chide him?

(To be continued.)

The chief secret of comfort lies in not suffering trifles to vex us, and in prudently cultivating our undergrowth of small pleasures, since very few great ones, alas! are let on long leases.

The difficulties of education lie deeper down than the curriculum. It is not so much finding out what to teach that is needful; the all important thing is how to develop the mental and moral energies.

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FACETIE.

Be content with your lot, especially if it's a lot of money.

MISS DUDN (playfully): "I'm older than you think I am." Miss Cauatique: "I doubt it."

ELLA: "Did Fred propose last night?" Stella: "I really don't know; I fell asleep about one o'clock."

"UNCLE BOB, what is a pedestrian?" "Why, he's the fellow who makes a row when a bicycle runs over him."

JONES: "I just met the hero of Daubore's new novel." SMITH: "Who is he?" JONES: "The man who has read it through."

CUSTOMER (entering poultry shop): "I should like to see a nice, fat goose." SMALL BOY: "Yes, sir. Father will be down directly."

DOCTOR: "My dear madam, I can do nothing whatever for you." LADY: "Gracious! What is the matter with me?" DOCTOR: "Nothing!"

"JORKINS, have you everything now that you will need for your fishing trip?" asked Mrs. Jorkins, solicitously. "Not by a jug full," said Jorkins, to the good woman's astonishment.

HELEN: "What makes you think that Eve rode a bicycle in the Garden of Eden?" LARKINS: "Merely inference. The Bible says she was the first woman."

PODSNAP: "My father was a member of Parliament!" RAY: "Well, it wasn't your fault. No right-thinking person will censure you for your father's misdeeds."

JUDGE: "You are charged with stealing Colonel Julep's chickens; have you any witnesses?" UNCLE MOSES: "I heb not. I don't steal chickens before witnesses."

LADY (engaging a servant): "We are all total abstainers, but I suppose you don't mind that?" Servant: "Oh, no, mum. I've been in a reformed drunkard's family before."

ASSISTANT: "Why not take a set of Dickens?" MRS. PARVENOO (making up a library): "I don't want anything so common as Dickens. Why, all sorts of people have his books!"

"VERY old family, is it not?" inquired MRS. GOLDBUG. "Very old indeed! It goes away back to the conquest of England by the Mormons," replied MRS. MALAPROP NEWROCKS.

"If I were you, my dear, I wouldn't tell my friends that I trimmed that hat myself," said a youthful Benedict. "Why, love! Would it be conceited?" "No—superfluous!"

"THAT account-collector is still downstairs, sir." "Didn't I tell you to say to him that I died quite suddenly half an hour ago?" "Yes, sir; but he says he would like a few moments' conversation with the corpse."

MAY: "How quickly you learned to wheel! It took me the whole winter to learn." MINNIE: "Oh, how deliciously jolly! You must have had a perfect love of a professor to have been all that time learning."

VIOLET: "Mr. Cholmondeley has asked me to go to the opera with him to-morrow night." DAISY: "That is strange. He has asked me also." "Yes; I told him I wouldn't go without a chaperon."

SHE (tearfully): "Henry, our engagement is at an end, and I wish to return to you everything you have ever given me." HE (cheerily): "Thanks, Blanche. You may begin at once with the kisses!" They are married now.

MAJOR PENDENNIS (who has given his nephew Arthur a cigar from his private box): "I've smoked worse cigars than these, Arthur, my boy." ARTHUR: "Yes, sir, I suppose you have; but you must remember that you are an older man than I am."

"I HAVEN'T anything new to sing to you to-night, George." "Well, give me something old, then." She broke into a refrain that was "a song of the day," seventeen years before. "That's very, very old, Clara," he remarked at the close. "Yes, George; I sang that to you the night we became engaged."

"Do you want a boy here?" "Yes." "What kind?" "A nice boy that doesn't swear or say naughty words or smoke cigarettes or play tricks or get into mischief or—That's enough, mister. I guess it's a girl you want. Good-bye."

"HERE, Jim, take these two cakes, and give the smaller one to your brother." JAMES examined the cakes carefully, appeared undecided, and finally took an heroic bite out of one of them, which he passed over to his brother with the remark: "There, Tommy, I've made you a smaller one; they were both the same size."

"THIS woman's paper," he said, looking up from it, "says that a woman should never, under any circumstances, wear a street gown in the house." "What of it?" she asked. "Oh, nothing," he replied, "except that I should think it would be awkward for a woman to change her gown on the front steps."

A CERTAIN manufacturer took into his office a nephew who, to put it mildly, was rather feeble-minded. One day he came to his uncle and said: "Uncle, what do you think the head clerk, Jones, has been telling people about me?" "I have no idea, I'm sure," replied the uncle. "He has been telling everybody that I am a fool." "Well," said the uncle, "I will see him and tell him to keep it quiet. He has no right to expose the secrets of the office."

OBSEQUIOUS PORTER (to passenger as train is about to start): "I have put your luggage in the van, sir." PASSENGER: "Ah! thanks, have you change for a shilling?" O. P. (counting copper and handing them through the carriage window): "I've got tenpence, sir." But before the passenger could find his shilling the train moved off, leaving the porter in open-mouthed astonishment. It is some time since this occurred, but not one of his mates dares to ask that porter for change for a shilling.

AN old York gentleman, meeting his grandson, said to him, in an impressive tone of voice, "My dear boy, I hear some very discouraging reports about you. They say you go behind the scenes, and are very much gone on Miss Topsie Littoe. Is that so?" "Yes, grandpa, to some extent." "Drop them, my boy. I know them, my son. They are a bad lot." "But, grandpa, the actresses of the present day are different from what they were when you were a young man, fifty years ago." "Not much, my boy. They are mostly the same identical actresses. Why, I was engaged once to Miss Topsie Littoe myself."

TOMPKINS is one of those gentlemen of kind disposition who are ever on the outlook for a chance to improve their neighbours' minds. Seeing a man, apparently a country fellow, sitting on the fence, regarding the telegraph wires carefully, Tompkins approached and said, "Watching the wires, eh?" "Yes, sir." "Waiting to see a message go by, eh?" "Yes, sir," the man replied, smiling. Then Tompkins spoke kindly to him and explained the mystery of the electric current, and that the messages were invisible, and finished up with, "Now you know something about it." Then, as he was going away, he said, by the way, "What do you work at?" "Me and my mate over yonder are telegraph workers, and we've just finished putting up a new wire."

IT was on the Metropolitan Railway that the following little episode occurred. Two ladies entered a third-class compartment which already held its exact complement of passengers; but, alas! for the lack of chivalry among nineteenth-century travellers, not a man present stirred from his seat to accommodate the fair fresh-comers. As the train steamed slowly out of the station, an abnormally stout individual in one of the corners, addressing a schoolboy seated opposite, remarked, with a wink intended to be facetious: "Why don't you get up and make room for one of the ladies?" The wink was quite thrown away upon the lad, who, after surveying the other's massive proportions for a moment with a critical eye, responded coolly: "Why don't you get up and make room for both of 'em?"

AN old woman was being questioned by a pert young counsel as to how the testator had looked when he had made a remark to her about her relative. "Now, how can I remember? He's been dead two years," she replied, testily. "Is your memory so poor that you can't remember two years back?" questioned the counsel. The old woman was silent, and the lawyer asked: "Did he look anything like me?" "Seems to me he did have the same sort of vacant look," responded the witness. And the "junior" had no further questions.

"OH, ALGY, don't you think that handsome Miss Brown is the nicest girl in the world?" ALGY smiled indulgently. "Why, yes, of course, May," she replied, "if you think so." "And her eyes! Oh, don't you think they are splendid?" "Very." "And hasn't she the cutest little mouth and the dearest face?" "Yes, indeed." "And such a beautiful complexion! And what hair!" "Very beautiful." "And then, isn't she graceful, and doesn't she waltz divinely?" "My, yes." "And isn't she the sweetest, sweetest girl you ever saw?" "Yes, indeed." "And don't you think she knows an awful lot, and—oh-o-o!" "Why, what on earth is the matter with you, May?" "Oh-o-o-o! I—thought—you—loved—me—best, ALGY!" "Why, so I do." "W-e-e-l-l, then, how can you bear to talk so ab—about—th—that—hor—horrible—ugly Brown girl!"

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"KAPUTINE" cures instantly.

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HEALTHY, WEALTHY & WISE.

An interesting little COPYRIGHT TREATISE, which should be carefully read by every English Wife. Sent FREE on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Apply M.D., 217, Graham Road, London, N.E. Please name this Paper.

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is by using ALIX ROSS's ordinary "Depilatory," 3s. 6d., post, 5s. 6d. For strong hair, the Electric Appliance, 3s. For thick hair, the Hair Remover, 3s. 6d. For eyebrows, 1s. 6d. His Skin Tightener, a liquid for removing furrows and crow's feet marks under the eyes, are each sold at 3s. 6d.; by post for 5s. stamps. The Nose Machine, for pressing the cartilage of the nose into shape, and the Ear Machine, for straightening the ears, 3s. 6d., or 5s. for stamp. ALIX ROSS, 63, Theobald's Road, High Holborn, London. Had through all Chemists. Letters replied to in stamped envelope; parcels sent free from observation.

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"LONDON READER" OFFICE,
334, Strand, London, W.C.

SOCIETY.

PRINCESS MAUD OF WALES numbers no less than two dozen bicycles of various makes and colours amongst her wedding presents.

THEIR will be a Royal party at Goodwood House this year during the race week. The Prince and Princess of Wales and Princess Victoria and the Duke and Duchess of York are to be the guests of the Duke of Richmond and Lady Caroline Gordon-Lennox from Monday, the 27th, until Friday, the 31st. The Royalties and their suites will travel by special train from Victoria to Drayton on the 27th, arriving at Goodwood in time for dinner, and on the 31st they will leave after the races, and are to proceed by special train from Chichester to Portsmouth Harbour, where they will join the Royal yacht Osborne, which is to convey them to Cowes Roads.

PRINCESS MAUD OF WALES and Prince Charles of Denmark will commence their married life with an income of about fifteen thousand a year, the bulk of which is an allowance from the Crown Princess of Denmark. They will live in the palace of the King of the Hellenes at Copenhagen, a suite of apartments having been set apart for their occupation. During the autumn Princess Maud and Prince Charles are to be the guests of the Crown Prince and Crown Princess at the castle of Charlottenlund, and in the winter they will reside at Appleton Hall, a place on the Sandringham estate, which has been lent for some time past to Major-General and Mrs. Stanley Clarke. They are to be at Copenhagen during the early spring months.

ENORMOUS prices are already being given for the various souvenirs distributed by the Russian Government during the Coronation festivities in Moscow; and those who are unwise enough to part with such interesting relics can demand and obtain almost any sum for them. For instance, one of the menu cards presented to each guest at the Coronation banquet in the Granovitais Palata cannot be bought for less than one hundred roubles (£10); while a single copy of the handsome book programme, given to all who were at the gala performance at the Grand Theatre, fetches fifty roubles. The Proclamation sheets, distributed by the heralds to the public, cost ten roubles; and every other memento of the historic occasion has a monetary value in proportion. These prices will probably rise much higher with the course of time, as it is strictly forbidden to reprint or reproduce any of these official gifts; and for this reason they can never become less scarce than they at present are.

THE Emperor and Empress of Russia will not come to England this year, their visit having been postponed until July, 1897. They intend to spend the next few weeks in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg at Peterhof, their summer palace on the Gulf of Finland, and at the Imperial chateau of Jelsgin, which is built on an island in the Neva, and has a large theatre, where there are to be private theatricals. The terrace and gardens command lovely views of the winding river and its wooded banks, with the sea in the distance.

PRINCESS MAUD has had several most useful cycling costumes sent to her as wedding presents, which have been fitted at Sandringham. One of them is of light brown tweed with knickerbockers drawn on elastic at knee, and fastened on the hips, being fitted in front with two darts on each side, and the back gathered into a band. The garters are buttoned on the outside and fastened under the foot with a small buckle and strap. The skirt is fitted to the figure in front with darts at the waist, and the fulness of the back is gathered into the band. The jacket fronts are cut in one with the first side piece and fitted to the figure of the Princess with a single bust dart on each side. It fastens at the waist with a silver clasp, both fronts being turned back and faced with revers of cloth to meet the double roll collar. The corners of the basque are rounded, and a pocket is made on each side. The sleeves are lined throughout, and the fulness at the top is gathered into the arm-hole and the waist.

STATISTICS.

THERE are 2,888, different kinds of bicycles. The theatres of London will seat 60,000 people.

OVER 4,800 marriages take place in England weekly.

INSURED property to the value of £30,000 is burnt in England every day.

THE inhabitants of the earth number about 1,400,000,000; of these 45,000,000 die every year—about one each second. There are 3,064 languages spoken, and there are more than 1,000 religions. The number of men is about equal to the number of women, and the average of life is about thirty-three years.

GEMS.

THE lessons we learn in the school of experience cost the most, but they are remembered the longest.

WITHIN every man's thought is a higher thought—within the character he exhibits to-day a higher character.

MELANCHOLY spreads itself betwixt heaven and earth, like envy between man and man, and is an everlasting mist.

OUT of suffering comes the serious mind; out of salvation the grateful heart; out of endurance, fortitude; out of deliverance, faith.

WHEN, by nobler culture, by purer experience, by breathing the air of a higher duty, vitality at length creeps into the soul, the instinct of immortality will wake within us. The word of hope will speak to us a language no longer strange. We shall feel like the captive bird carried accidentally to its own lands, when, hearing for the first time the burst of kindred song, it beats instinctively the bars of its cage.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ROLY POLY PUDDING.—Make a biscuit dough, and roll it out in a square about a quarter of an inch thick. Spread over, leaving about an inch of margin, any kind of fruit or berries, then roll up tight. Put it in a pan or tin, and steam an hour. Serve with any liquid sauce.

SALT FISH IN CREAM.—Tear a piece of fish into strips, wash clean, and simmer in a basin of water half an hour. Pour off the water, and add one half pint of milk. When this comes to a boil, thicken with one spoonful of flour; let it boil five minutes; then add butter the size of a walnut, and a little pepper and salt.

STRAWBERRY TARTS.—Make a good paste with two-thirds of a cup of butter or lard, and two cups of flour, one teaspoonful of baking powder, and one tablespoonful of sugar. Line shells or cut out small rounds of the paste, to which add rims. Bake, and when cool fill with sweetened berries, and cover each with whipped cream. Keep in a cool place until ready to serve.

SNOWDRIFT CAKE.—Two cups of powdered sugar, one heaping cup of prepared flour, ten eggs, the whites only, whipped stiff; juice of one lemon and half the grated peel; a little salt. Whip the egg stiff, beat in the sugar, lemon and salt, and finally the flour. Stir in very lightly and quickly, and bake at once in two loaves. This is delicious when fresh.

ORANGE JELLY.—Dissolve one box gelatine in a cup of cold water. Over this pour in an hour's time a cup of boiling water. Stir until melted; then add two cups of sugar, a stick of cinnamon, the grated rind of an orange and a lemon, the juice of three oranges and one lemon, and a cup of good sherry. Strain through a fine cloth, and pour into moulds that have been first dipped into cold water.

MISCELLANEOUS.

IRELAND has less suicides than any other country in the world.

A DOCTOR says that the growth of children takes place entirely when they are asleep.

THE silks from which British Naval flags are made are all woven in Switzerland.

Fire insurance companies were in existence in Italy in the twelfth century. They were established in England in the sixteenth century.

THE latest watch is a marvel of ingenuity. It is the size of a small solitaire, and is intended to be worn as the button of a shirt or sleeve.

NEAR the Caspian Sea there are several "eternal fires," so-called by the natives, where natural gas issues from the ground and has been on fire for ages.

HOLLOW glass bricks are in use in Paris for building purposes. They are light and durable, and are non-conductors of heat because of the air contained in them.

THE most curious paper-weight in the world is said to belong to the Prince of Wales. It is—so report goes—the mummified hand of one of the daughters of Pharaoh.

SEARCH is being made in the subterranean rooms of the great Kremlin IV, surnamed "the terrible." Eight hundred famous, but lost, manuscripts are supposed to be hidden there.

A GOOD deal of "real" morocco is made from the skin of the ray. As for the salmon, its skin is also tanned. The result is a very attractive scale-marked leather. This is used chiefly in Asia.

TURKEY bones are said to make the most perfect pipe-stems imaginable. The substance is light, porous, and resists the pressure of the teeth. Smoke drawn through the turkey bone is cool and sweet.

UNBORN babies in India are sometimes used as security for debt. When the father of a family is obliged to borrow money to defray the expenses of his daughter's wedding he will pledge her first-born son as collateral.

THE cost of timber in China is so great that wooden trestles are out of the question. The railway station-houses are all built of light, burned brick, plastered on the outside. The broad platforms are of stone or concrete filled in with earth and cinders.

THE marks on cards are said to have their origin in a symbolic representation of four different classes of society. Hearts represented the clergy; spades the nobility, derived from the Italian word "spada," meaning sword; clubs the serfs; and diamonds the citizens.

THE introduction of sugar into England is dated as late as the fifteenth century, but it was really in use here in the thirteenth. Zucro is mentioned under date of 1242. Later we read of rose and violet sugar, sugar in tablets and in gilded wafers. When Princess Mary went on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, in 1317, she consoled herself for any mortifications she may have met on the road with five and a half pounds of sugar tablets, and eight and a half pounds of rose sugar of honey. Other ancient sweets were preserved ginger and citron candy.

AN eating-house made of paper has been erected in the port of Hamburg. Its walls are composed of a double layer of paper stretched on frames and impregnated with a fire and waterproof solution. A thin wooden partition affords further protection against the inclemency of the weather. The roofs and walls are fastened together by means of bolts and hinges, so that the entire structure may be rapidly taken to pieces and put up again. The dining-room itself measures thirty metres by six metres, and is capable of accommodating about one hundred and fifty persons. There are twenty-two windows and four sky-lights, and the heating is effected by a couple of isolated stoves. A side erection contains the manager's offices, kitchen, larder and dwelling-rooms. The total cost of the construction is said to have amounted to fifteen hundred marks.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

WALY.—Apply to a police magistrate.

F. T.—Take it to Somerset House and make inquiry.

GOCKNEY.—There is no public institution of the sort.

GUTTERMAN.—Nothing more than you have already done.

INQUISITIVE.—We have not the information asked for.

OLD COIN.—They are worth clear face value but nothing more.

IN DIFFICULTIES.—The assistance of a lawyer must be obtained.

MOTHER-OF-PEARL.—A little vinegar will clean ibrines in stoves.

BUTTERCUP.—The permission of the author must first be obtained.

LINCOLN.—You should communicate the facts to the postmaster.

MOSQUEL.—The value is precisely what anyone will give you for the animal.

MEMPHIS.—Questions as to the money and the claims on it must be referred to a solicitor.

MISERABLE.—The Married Women's Property Act fully secures all your separate property.

SUMMER.—If the dress is white, borax or ammonia will remove them.

RECIPIENT.—Every receipt for a sum exceeding two pounds must bear a penny stamp.

CHATTERBOX.—The unexplored area of Canada is estimated at 1,000,000 square miles.

PERSEVERANCE.—Take French then German, and Spanish is easily learned by one who has French.

T. Y.—The Indian Mutiny was suppressed in 1859. A thanksgiving was held in London on May 1st in that year.

ROSENTHAL.—It is not essential to have a party in the evening, but it is no violation of etiquette to do so; it is very often done.

FAIRY.—Lotteries have been permitted in England at different times. They were forbidden by Act of Parliament passed in 1826.

PRIDE.—The line "Pride hath no other glass to show itself but pride," is from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, Act III.

O. M.—That will depend on how you prepare it. Do not put in too much resin; it ought to remain moist if you are careful in making it.

GOOSEBERRY.—Three pounds gooseberries, three pints of six small breakfast cups water, six pounds sugar; put all into a jelly pan and boil for one hour, and you will have a lovely red-coloured jam.

W. W.—Your best plan will be to consult the catalogue at the reference library, where the librarian will be willing to assist you in finding such a book as you want.

DISINCHAGEMENT.—The best way to dispose of them is to shave their tops off with a razor, then touch them daily afterwards with ascorbic acid; in a short time they will break up and disappear.

MAGPIE.—You can try a little nitrate of silver if you like. Except with those which have an overplus of grease it is fairly permanent, especially when made with ammonia.

DOROTHY.—Most of them yield to benzine; get pennyworth from chemist, and rub it on stain with a bit of dark cloth until the coat is clean, then shave and hang in a current of air to free it of smell.

ELAINE.—The brightness of tarnished brass may be restored by dissolving in a saucer of ammonia a little of the most scorching soap sold. Apply with a brush, and polish with camomile.

MARMADUKE.—The 19th, 20th, and 21st of June are all of precisely the same length; the last of the three is usually given as the longest; the same is true of the 20th, 21st and 22nd of December as regards shortness.

JO.—You might try by using impalpable emery and such as is employed by plate glass polishers; a little of the finest putty powder might be mixed with it; we cannot, however, promise it will answer.

X. Y. Z.—We cannot give you the quantities. If you boil the oil sufficiently it cannot fail to become sticky; the other ingredients you must mix according to your own discretion at the time of making up the stuff.

BABY.—The "Seven Wonders of the world" were the Pyramids, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, the Statue of Jupiter by Phidias at Athens, the Mausoleum, the Colossus of Rhodes, and the Pharos of Alexandria.

H. O. G.—The unnatural heat and redness of the hands arise from a disordered system, and we have no doubt that if you get your liver into healthy action by medicine and a judicious attention to diet this unpleasant symptom will leave you.

BACHMANN.—If you are going into any such business be very cautious and do not invest too much at once. Go very slowly until you learn how to manage, otherwise you will not only not make anything but will lose what you already have.

MARION.—Any strong spirit in the drawer in which they are kept—or bitter apples from the chemist's cut in slices, sewn up in muslin bags, and placed among the articles, whether woollen or furs, will preserve them from the attacks of the moth.

MEMBER OF SOCIETY.—When you introduce a lady to a gentleman you address the lady first, naming the gentleman; then turn to the gentleman and name the lady to him; the lady must have the option of refusing the introduction, and that is given by appealing first to her.

MOUCHER.—Flies are influenced by smells; some they like exceedingly, such as the smell of decay in any form; some they hate beyond measure, such as the sharp pungent odour of turpentine, the heavy scent of geraniums, and the peculiar perfume of the flower employed in making insect powder.

SANDY.—There are freckles that can never get rid of freckles, try what one may, and others that can be cleared of them, but upon the first exposure to the sunlight they will return. The more remedies such people try, the more sensitive the skin becomes, and the more easily the freckles are brought out.

A LONDONER.—The derivation of the word "cockney" is generally thought to come from the Latin *coginare*, "a kitchen," Londoners—especially city people—being proverbially fond of good living. The "King of the Cockneys" was an important personage in some of the old *meets*.

LOVING ADA.—The title of her present Majesty is as follows: "Her Most Excellent Majesty Victoria, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, Sovereign of the Orders of the Garter, Thistle, Bath, St. Patrick, St. Michael, St. George, and Victoria."

CHICKEN.—The proper way is to provide a neat natty box, say four inches square, and fitted with compartments. From time to time place therein such necessities as grit, limestone, calcined oyster shell and broken rock salt. It is well to make the box so that it can be hung on the wired front of the run.

TOO LATE.

WHAT use for the rope if it be not flung,
Till the swimmer's grasp to the rock has clung?
What help in a comrade's bugle blast
When the peril of Alpine height is passed?
What need that the spurting pean roll
When the runner is safe within the goal?
No, no; if you have but a word of cheer,
Speak it while I am alive to hear.
How much would I care for it could I know
That when I am under the grass or snow,
The ravelled garments of life's brief day
Folded and quietly laid away,
The spirit let loose from mortal bars,
And somewhere away among the stars.
How much do you think it would matter then
What praise was lavished upon me when
What never might be its stint or store,
If neither could help or harm me more?

M. P.

EAGER.—Garments which have been immersed, after washing in a solution of twenty per cent. of tungstate of soda, to which three per cent. of phosphates of soda has been added, may be considered to some extent fire-proof. They are more resistant to fire than would otherwise be the case.

SUGY.—Soak three-quarters of a cup of tapioca over night; drain, turn in a double boiler, add four cups of hot water, and cook until clear and transparent. Take from the fire, stir into it one pint of fresh fruit (strawberries, raspberries, or other small fruit), sweeten to taste, and serve hot or cold with whipped cream.

PATRIOT.—England is South Britain, Scotland North Britain, both together Great Britain; Ireland is included under the style of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland; in common every day usage, however, Great Britain is employed to cover the whole Empire.

ADRIAN'S BRIDE.—Dish the cream in individual moulds. Scoop out the centre of each one and replace it by a cup of well-sweetened berries. Set the moulds after covering them in salt and ice, or in a large covered pail packed in salt and ice, and turn them out on low crystal plates. When you are ready to serve them wreath them with whipped cream.

GAMA.—The great earthquake at Lisbon occurred in May, 1755, when in about eight minutes most of the houses, and fifty thousand of the inhabitants, were destroyed, and whole streets swallowed up. It originated in the island of Motelina, in the Archipelago, whence it extended five thousand miles, doing considerable damage in Spain and Africa, as well as in Portugal.

AN INVETERATE SMOKER.—Cigarette smoking in this country dates back to about 1844. The great impetus to their increased use was caused by the Crimean War of 1854-56, when numbers of our military and naval officers adopted this method of smoking from the inhabitants of Russia, Turkey, Malta, Levant, and other parts of Europe. The first well-known person who smoked cigarettes publicly in the street was the late Laurence Oliphant, who had resided for many years in Russia, Turkey, and Austria, where the habit prevailed.

ENGLISHWOMAN.—Iced drinks are just light mixtures, sometimes mixed with sprit, wine, rum, &c., and sometimes not, set in ice for a time. Here is one, "sherbet" it is called. Pare the thin yellow part of three lemons, six ounces of sugar, one quart of water. Put lemon rind, juice and sugar together, put a little water on them, and stand quarter of an hour, then pour in the rest of the water, and put it on ice; then stir up and pour out. The recipes for iced drinks are innumerable.

M. N.—When it is not convenient to broil fish over an open fire, it may be nicely broiled in a very hot oven. Prepare as for the usual way of broiling, and lay with the skin down over a fish rack or on a piece of oiled paper in a roasting pan. Cook on the upper grates of the oven until browned, seasoning it at first with salt, pepper, melted butter, and dusting with flour. To be palatable, broiled fish should always be garnished with parsley and cresses and sliced lemon, or a piquant sauce.

BARBE.—Beards were not universally worn by the ancients. The ancient Tartars made it a matter of religion to wear the beard long, and waged a long and bloody war with the Persians because they would not conform to the custom. The Greeks generally wore beards until the reign of Alexander, who ordered his soldiers to shave lest the beard should serve as a handle to their enemies in battle. Beards were commonly worn by the Romans, and in all ages by the Jews. The English wore beards until Charles II.

NORTH.—Take two pounds of flour, one teaspoonful of salt, two teaspoonsfuls of baking soda, four teaspoonsfuls of cream of tartar, and some butter milk; rub the lumps carefully out of the powders and mix all the dry things with the flour, stir in the butter milk to make a soft dough, divide the dough into four pieces, make each piece round after kneading it a little, roll out about half an inch thick, put plenty of flour on the top, and put on the griddle; you can cut the scone in four either before it is put on the griddle or after.

MAJORIE.—Gather the flowers in the morning when dry and lay them in the sun till the evening; the flowers should be roses, orange flowers, jasmine, lavender, and just a little thyme, marjoram, sage and bay; place them in a wide earthen jar in layers, and sprinkle quarter pound cloves and quarter pound mace on the leaves and some bay salt, say a handful on each layer, and leave it for a day or two; it will be a little damp; put it into jars and stir it frequently for a week or two. Another receipt is to use the following ingredients in the same way: Six pound bay salt, two ounces bruised cinnamon, some of cloves, quarter ounce yellow sandal wood, the same each of acorns, calamus root, cassia buds, and orris root powder, one scruple of musk, half pound gum benzoin in powder, one ounce calamine staves, and one drachm of roses. This is more expensive, but it is very delicious.

FLINT.—If the stamp is placed upside down at the top left hand corner of the letter that means "the writer loves you;" same corner but crosswise, "My Heart belongs to another and can never be yours;" same corner, proper way, "Goodbye for the present, dearest;" same corner, right angle, "I hate you;" bottom left-hand corner, same way, "I wish your friendship, nothing more;" same corner upside down, "Write soon;" if put on a line with the surname on left hand side, "Accept my love;" upside down, same position, "I am already engaged;" upside down, right-hand corner, "My heart is another's, write no more;" crosswise same corner, "Do you love me dearest?" right-hand side of surname, proper way, "I long to see you, write immediately;" bottom right-hand corner, upside down, "Yes;" bottom right-hand corner, proper way, "Business correspondence."

A LOVER OF SCIENCE.—A large, perfectly flat stone table is provided. Upon it is evenly spread a sheet of tin foil without cracks or flaws; this is covered uniformly to the depth of one-eighth of an inch with clean mercury. The plate of glass, perfectly cleaned from all grease and impurities, is floated on to the mercury carefully so as to exclude all air bubbles. It is then pressed down by loading it with weights in order to press out all the mercury which remains fluid, which is received in a gutter around the stone. After about twenty-four hours it is raised gently upon its edge, and in a few weeks it is ready to frame. It is said to be desirable to have the lower end of the glass, from which the mercury was drained, at the bottom of the frame. To convex and concave mirrors the amalgamated foil is applied by means of accurately fitting plaster moulds. The interior of globes is silvered by introducing a liquid amalgam, and turning about the globe until every part is covered with it.

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